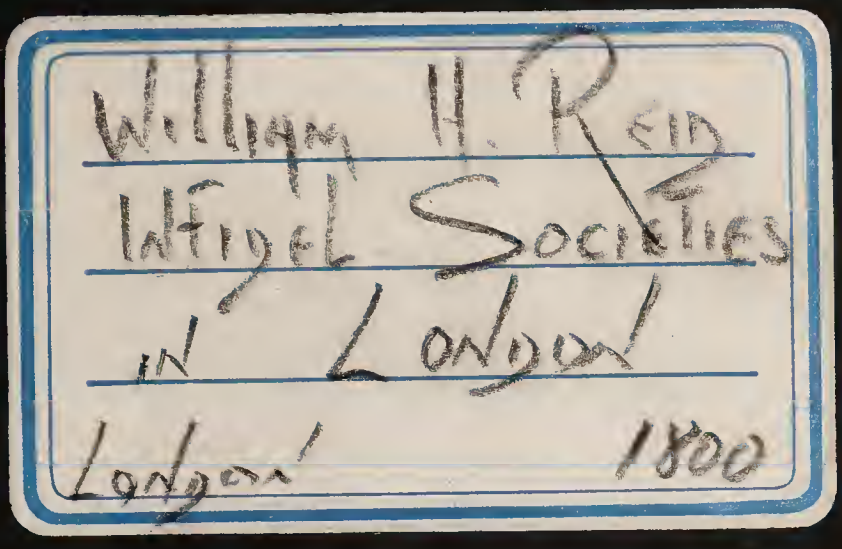
William H. Reid
Infidel Societies
in London
London
1800

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THE

RISE AND DISSOLUTION

OF THE

INFIDEL SOCIETIES

IN THIS METROPOLIS:

INCLUDING,

THE ORIGIN OF MODERN DEISM AND ATHEISM; THE GENIUS AND CONDUCT OF THOSE ASSOCIATIONS; THEIR LECTURE-ROOMS, FIELD-MEETINGS, AND DEPUTATIONS;

From the Publication of PAINE'S AGE OF REASON till the preſent Period.

Φάσκοντες εἶναι σοφοὶ, ἐμωράνθησαν. ST. PAUL.

WITH

General Conſiderations on the Influence of Infidelity upon Society; anſwering the various Objections of Deiſts and Atheiſts; and a Poſtſcript upon the preſent State of Democratical Politics; Remarks upon Profeſſor Robiſon's late Work, &c. &c.

BY WILLIAM HAMILTON REID.

LONDON:

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INTRODUCTION

THE Reader is candidly informed, that the mention of *Infidel Societies*, by the Biſhop of London, in his late excellent charge, was a forcible motive for digeſting the narrative contained in this work. After the enumeration of its contents, in the title-page, it is ſcarcely neceſſary to inſiſt upon this new and important æra, herein deſcribed: *new*, becauſe it delineates the firſt period in which the doctrines of Infidelity have been extenſively circulated among the lower orders; and *important*, becauſe the trial they have had, as it will appear in the ſequel, has decidedly pronounced upon their weakneſs, and abſolute incapacity to ameliorate or improve the ſtate and condition of mankind.

Profeſſor Robiſon and the Abbé Barruel, it is acknowledged, have given an intereſting account of ſimilar ſocieties in France and Ger-

many, previous to the late revolution; but if theſe are to be regarded as an illuſtration of the monition

"*Nam tua res agitur paries cum proximus ardet,*"

the firing of a neighbour's houſe ſhall be eſteemed trivial indeed, in compariſon with a mine that was ready to burſt our under feet! With the exiſtence of theſe Engliſh affiliations, it is probable, that, few of the higher orders were acquainted; but their extenſive influence and energies, certainly communicate a degree of intereſt to the detail here given, as the firſt account of them.

The Author of this undertaking, having been involved in the dangerous deluſion he now explodes, may reaſonably be admitted a competent witneſs of the events which he relates; as may alſo the preſumption, that he has demonſtrated the impracticability of the Infidel ſcheme, not merely from ſpeculation, to which former writers have been confined, but from facts deduced from real life and actual experience.

Like our predeceſſors, we are then no longer under the neceſſity of arguing without a living precedent; on the contrary, we have ſeen the

principles

principles of Infidelity transferred from *books* to *men*; from *dead* characters to *living* ſubjects; not among a few iſolated or ſpeculative individuals, but in numerous and compact bodies.

What was formerly a diſpute, is thus brought upon a new ground; and from the heterogeneous compoſition of this upſtart body, the queſtion "Whether a Society of Atheiſts can "ſubſiſt?" it is preſumed, may now be decided in the negative.

Agreeable to this ſtatement, Mr. Robert Hall, of Cambridge, in the preface to his Sermon intituled, *Modern Infidelity conſidered, &c.* obſerves, that the cotroverſy between Infidels and Chriſtians *appears to have taken a new turn*: the influence of Infidelity upon ſociety, he ſays, is a point hitherto little conſidered. The preſent expoſure of theſe opinions, by one who has witneſſed their moſt ſecret operations; and the moſt unqualified expreſſion of the views of thoſe who eſpouſed them, may awaken the rancour of Infidel fanatics; but this he preſumes, will be more than counter balanced by the approbation of the learned and ſober-minded of all Chriſtian denominations. As for the probable defects of this work, in point of

ſtyle, or in the art of compoſition, my apology to the learned is, that it was written upon the ſpur of the occaſion, and *currente calamo*.

Perhaps the relative obſcurity of theſe affiliations may have been the reaſon they were not ſooner noticed; as, in reſpect to their locality in this metropolis, it muſt be confeſſed they bear ſome reſemblance with the Pariſian Fauxbourgs of St. Antoine, &c.

After the faithful delineation of facts, in this work, it is hoped, Infidels will no longer claim the character of Philoſophers! If Philoſophy has any connection with the conduct of the human mind, towards the *Chief-good*, it is not the Infidel, but the rational Chriſtian, who has the beſt right to that high diſtinction; for, "the man who happily unites Philoſophy with Religion, is the dupe, neither of ſcepticiſm, ſuperſtition, or fanaticiſm."

Were I at liberty to mention *ſeveral eminent literary characters*, who have honoured this work with their attention, while in manuſcript, it might be conſtrued into an attempt to bias the public opinion; but, till that deciſion is pronounced, the Author alone, is reſponſible for the whole; I am therefore "ready

to

to prove any thing I have ſtated, if called upon."

Quod ſcripſi, ſcripſi.

The importance of the ſubject at large, might have been enhanced by ſuperior abilities; but relative to its religious truths, I am not afraid of concluding with the exulting ſtrains of the Roman Poet:

Jam exegi quod nec Jovis ira, nec ignes,
Nec potuit ferrum, nec edax abolere vetuſtas.

THE

THE

RISE AND DISSOLUTION, &c.

CHAP. I.

Upon ſome remote and the immediate Cauſes of the late Riſe and Progreſs of Infidelity.—Patronage of the Age of Reaſon by the London Correſponding Society.—Mirabaud's Syſtem De la Nature.—Volney's Ruins of Empires.—Converſion of the Diviſion-Rooms into the Mediums of Infidelity.

TO ſuppoſe the late inclination to infidelity, to have been the reſult of cool inquiry, or rational conviction, would be a groſs libel upon the good ſenſe of the country. On the contrary, the moſt prominent reaſon which can be given for this new propenſity is, that the public mind was taken by ſurprize, merely through the medium by which the evil complained of was obtruded by a certain ſociety, aſſiſted by the politics of the moment.

With theſe politics, it was ſuppoſed the new religion would blend and unite; and to the miſ-

applied zeal of this ſociety, and its partizans out of doors, the ſhort-lived increaſe of thoſe opinions was owing.

Still there were other cauſes which, though ſeemingly remote, had an immediate effect upon the minds of many who were waiting to avail themſelves of any public event to promote a particular object. It being a general tradition among Proteſtants, that the ſeat of the Roman Catholic religion was to be annihilated, it unfortunately occurred, that, as the French were ſucceſsful, after the period of the revolution, in deſpoiling that church, notwithſtanding their general eſpouſal of infidelity, their admirers ſtill ſuppoſed them to be the *inſtruments* of fulfilling their favourite prediction; and were ſo much the eaſier perſuaded to adopt French principles in religion, while they excuſed the perpetrators of deeds, at which they could not but ſhudder, under the idea that the former were the ſelect *agents* of Providence; and thus, from the dereliction of one religious denomination, they were led, by an eaſy gradation, to wiſh for the deſtruction of all the reſt.

From hence, under the idea of the inſtrumentality of the French revolution, in the fulfilment of prophecies, religion itſelf became acceſſary to deiſm and atheiſm! Prophecies, relative to the deſtruction of almoſt every kingdom and empire in the world, teemed from the Britiſh preſs, ſome of them in weekly numbers, till government, perfectly aware of the tendency of theſe inflammatory means, prudently transferred the prince of prophets to a mad-houſe.

It was natural for infidels, who had a revolution in view, to connive at thoſe enthuſiaſts who believed in vulgar predictions relative to the deſtruction of Popery; it was natural alſo for the former to embrace

ſuch

ſuch converts; but the attachment they obtained from thoſe characters, who had the leaſt remains of true religion, was of very ſhort duration; as the general habit of ridiculing every thing before held ſacred, frequently created diſguſt, and occaſioned a revolt from a party, who, notwithſtanding all their profeſſions about a *general* improvement of the morals of men, could not conceal the little value they ſet upon *perſonal reformation!* juſt as if the aggregate of ſociety was not made up of individuals. In fact, to have hinted any thing relative to religious impreſſions, though with all the modifications of a Socinian, would have ſtigmatized its author as a mere ideot, or driveller, among theſe modern ſages and pretended reformers. The Rev. Henry Kett, in his ſtriking application of the Scriptures in his *Hiſtory, the beſt Interpreter of Prophecy*, ſeems to impute too little to the ſecret and almoſt imperceptible operations of Infidelity through the whole courſe of the laſt century, eſpecially in the interval between the publication of Bolingbroke's works, and the year 1776. This hiatus, not to keep my readers from the contemplation of more recent danger, I ſhall endeavour to ſupply in my poſtſcript, only obſerving at preſent, as the immediate cauſe of the late riſe and progreſs of infidelity, that an Engliſhman in Paris, the head of a political party here, probably wiſhing to revive his popularity in France, produced that laſt effort of religious Quixotiſm, the Age of Reaſon. The early predilection of the London Correſponding Society for this performance, was the ſole medium which, for the firſt time, made infidelity as familiar as poſſible with the lower orders. But the experiment thus tried, inſtead of conſolidating the wild theory of its authors, has only furniſhed their

Chriſtian opponents with the ſtrongeſt grounds of objection.

It may now be ſaid, that the ſplendid theories of Voltaire have been reduced to practice; the impaſſioned eloquence of John James Rouſſeau applied to the objects deſignated by its author; and that the pertneſs and ſcurrility of Thomas Paine have been added: but all theſe efforts have been, and will ſtill be found illuſory, as will farther appear from a faithful ſtatement of recent events, and ſuch reflections as naturally reſult therefrom.

If the facts I am about to adduce were not well warranted, poſterity would not believe, that in conſequence of the publication of a rhapſody againſt the doctrines of Chriſtianity, hazarded by a theoretical politician in 1794, and under favour of the French revolution, a very conſiderable number of our countrymen adopted his notions; and became equally as violent for the extermination of the Chriſtian religion, as for the remedy of thoſe *civil abuſes*, for which alone their ſociety was at firſt eſtabliſhed!

Without experience of the fact, who would believe that while the infatuated diſciples of the new philoſophy were declaiming againſt their clergy, for mingling politics with religion, they themſelves, employed miſſionaries to add deiſm to the democracy of their converts! Or, who would credit that every religious obligation, in civilized ſociety, was reſiſted as prieſtcraft, by the ſame perſons who were the loudeſt in their demands, for what they choſe to diſguiſe with the name of a reform!

Perhaps this mania, in its firſt appearance, may be attributed to an implicit belief in moſt of its advocates, that the new philoſophy would produce better effects upon the manners of ſociety, than

the

the religion of their forefathers had done. But how ſtrongly the *practice* of the philoſophers has belied the *theory*, will evidently appear in the impartial examination of their public conduct, which, as propagandiſts, would have been much more alarming, had their ſecret activity been appreciated ſooner.

It is ſtill fair to admit, that the adoption of Paine's Age of Reaſon was not agreed, to in the London Correſponding Society, without conſiderable oppoſition, eſpecially in the general committee; but as zeal ſuperſeded judgment, in their diſcuſſions upon the ſubject, the epithets of d-m--d fool, and d-m--d Chriſtian, ultimately prevailed; and a bookſeller was ſoon perſuaded, by the heads of the party, to undertake a cheap edition of the Age of Reaſon, for its more ready diſſemination through the diviſions, at that time rapidly increaſing in number every week: but after Williams, the bookſeller juſt alluded to, was impriſoned for this publication, his family received much leſs aſſiſtance from the ſociety, than from mere ſtrangers.

In the hour of its admiration, this rhapſody was ridiculouſly termed the *New Holy Bible;* a circumſtance which fully evinced the intentions of Mr. Paine's partizans: in fine, the attachment of the party was carried ſo far, that the bare circumſtance of having the Age of Reaſon in a houſe, was deemed a collateral proof of the *civiſm* of the poſſeſſor.

It may be urged, that this conduct of the ſociety was never juſtified by any act of the body at large: this is granted; but when it is conſidered, that their inclination for deiſm was ſufficiently powerful to occaſion a ſchiſm, which produced a *new ſociety*, under

under the denomination of the *Civil* and *Religious*; it follows, that the preponderance of a party, in the original body, was equal to a deciſion of the whole, and fixes the charge of a partiality to infidelity, beyond the poſſibility of a doubt.

If farther proofs were wanting, I might urge the circumſtance of the eſtabliſhment of a teſt, by the newly formed body, in which, each member acknowledged the *belief of the Holy Scriptures, and that Chriſt is the Son of God*; and this as a neceſſary qualification for their admiſſion. This fact alone, I preſume, would be ſufficient for my purpoſe; to which may be added, that Bone and Lee, two ſeceding members, and bookſellers by profeſſion, were *proſcribed* for refuſing to ſell Volney's Ruins, and Paine's Age of Reaſon; and that refuſal conſtrued into a cenſure upon the weakneſs of their intellects. Still, nothing like a miraculous converſion of the London Correſponding Society is to be imputed to Mr. Paine's Anti-theological Work. On the contrary, their minds were prepared for this more popular performance, by the more learned and elaborate productions of Mirabaud's Syſtem of Nature, and Volney's Ruins of Empires: the latter, in point of ſtyle, is looked upon as the Hervey of the Deiſts; the former, as the Newton of the Atheiſts: and, as the Syſtem of Nature was tranſlated by a perſon confined in Newgate as a patriot, and publiſhed in weekly numbers, its ſale was puſhed, from the joint motive of ſerving the Author, and the cauſe in which the London Correſponding Society were engaged.

Northcote's Life of David was alſo reprinted in a very ſmall edition; and if this vehicle for degrading the Bible had been better received, it was in agitation to biographize all the leading characters

ters in the Old and New Teſtaments, as the moſt certain means of bringing the Chriſtian religion into contempt.

Propoſals were circulated for reprinting the whole works of Peter Annet; much being expected from the plainneſs of his ſtyle, and his mode of reaſoning againſt revelation by ſcriptural quotations; but, owing to the dread of a proſecution, not more than three weekly numbers, at three-halfpence each, made their appearance. The Rights and Duties of Citizenſhip, moſt remarkable for copying the blunders of Voltaire, was one of the laſt things, of this kind, uſhered into public view; but being proſecuted, and the publiſhers ſentenced to two years ſolitary impriſonment, a final ſtop was put to this mode of promoting ſcepticiſm and infidelity.

The Beauties of Deiſm; A Moral Dictionary; Julian againſt Chriſtianity; and, laſtly, that paragon of French Atheiſm, Le Bon Sens, *Ou Idées Naturelles oppoſes aux Idées Surnaturelles*, were in agitation to have followed. The latter, for its audacity and virulence, has poſſibly never been ſurpaſſed, and its laſt ſection is probably no bad ſummary of the whole.

" La religion, n'a fait en tout tems que rem-
" plir l'eſprit de l'homme de tenebres et le retenir
" dans l'ignorance de ſes vrais rapports, de ſes
" vrais devoirs, de ſes interêts véritables. Ce n'eſt
" qu'en écartant ſes nuages et ſes phantômes que
" nous decouvrirons les ſources du vrai, de la
" raiſon, de la morale, & les motifs reels qui doi-
" vent nous porter à la vertu. Cette religion nous
" donne le change, & ſur les cauſes de nos maux
" & ſur les remedes naturels que nous pourrions
" y appliquer: loin de les guerir, elle ne peut
" que les aggraver, les multiplier, & les rendre

" plus

" plus durables. Diſons donc avec un celebre " moderne, *la Theologie eſt la boite de Pandore;* " *& s'il eſt impoſſible de la refermer, il eſt au-* " *moins utile d'avertir que cette boete ſi fatale eſt* " *ouverte.*"

Impregnated with the principal objections of all the infidel writers, and big with the fancied importance of being inſtrumental in a general reform, almoſt every diviſion-room could now boaſt its advocate for the new philoſophy. In fact, ſuch a torrent of abuſe and declamation appeared to burſt from all quarters at once, that as the idea of a *Deiſt* and a good *Democrat* ſeemed to have been univerſally compounded, very few had the courage to oppoſe the general current. On the other hand, ſeveral perſons really ſacrificed their private ſentiments to the public opinion, merely to avoid the contempt every where beſtowed upon thoſe who dared to open their mouths in defence of principles and opinions, till then held ſacred.

Next to ſongs, in which the clergy were a ſtanding ſubject of abuſe; in conjunction with pipes and tobacco, the tables of the club-rooms were frequently ſtrewed with penny, two-penny, and three-penny publications, as it were ſo many ſwivels againſt eſtabliſhed opinions; while, to enable the members to furniſh themſelves with the heavy artillery of Voltaire, Godwin, &c. reading-clubs were formed. But ſtill, ſo it happened, that thoſe who deſpiſed the labour of reading, took their creeds implicitly, from the extemporaneous effuſions of others, whoſe talents were comparatively above their own. And yet theſe people were invariably in the habit of ridiculing Chriſtians, in concert with the orators, for being blindly led by prieſts.

After theſe notions of infidelity were in a manner eſtabliſhed in the diviſions, it is natural to ſuppoſe, that in chooſing their delegates, thoſe perſons were preferred who were doubly recommended by *their religion*, and their politics; in fact, this was ſo prevalent, that in the recommendation of any perſon to an office among them, it was common to diſtinguiſh him as "*A good Democrat* "*and a Deiſt.*" Or, to fix the character more ſtrongly, to add, "*That he is no Chriſtian.*"

However, from this period, when the leaders began to force their anti-religious opinions upon their co-aſſociates, it is undeniable that their inteſtine diviſions haſtened their diſſolution more than any external obſtacles.

I ſhall now proceed to a detail of the recent places of rendezvous, as they were held by theſe perturbed ſpirits, which, I hope, will not be deemed trivial. The once famed Robin Hood Society had ſeveral hiſtorians in proſe and verſe; and yet, unlike its ſucceſſors, it combined no *political* with its ſo-called *religious* views. In its decline alone it bore the moſt reſemblance to the modern clubs, in the defection of many of its beſt members, when the conſequences of their diſcuſſions, acting upon the public morals, appeared to them in a different light from what they ſeemed at firſt.

CHAP. II.

Of various new Societies, Field-Meetings, and Deputations.—Their Conduct and Progreſs.—Violence of the Clubbiſts againſt the Clergy.—Effects of their Enthuſiaſm upon their Auditors.—Propagandiſts in the Benefit and Convivial Societies.

ONE of the firſt of theſe aſſociations was fixed in the club-room of the Green Dragon, in Foreſtreet, near Cripplegate, in the ſpring of 1795. That apartment was then occupied by a Reading Society, which was ſoon ſwallowed up in the vortex of the enſuing debate, and was ſo much crowded, in a very ſhort time, as to render an entrance, as well as reſpiration, extremely difficult.

That no opportunity might be loſt, a queſtion, ſubverſive of the Chriſtian religion, was alſo agitated, in the ſame room, on a Wedneſday evening; but being very thinly attended, it was found neceſſary to pay both the ſpeakers and preſident, out of the money collected from the audience.

On the other hand, the debate on a Sunday evening always drew a crowded audience, during a twelvemonth, in which it was continued at that houſe; when, upon the complaint of ſome of the neighbours, that the landlord kept bad hours, (as the diſputes above and below ſtairs ſeldom terminated before one in the morning) they were compelled to leave the premiſes, to prevent worſe conſequences to the keeper of the houſe.

Their

Their ſittings were afterwards alternately held at a houſe in Windmill-ſtreet, Finſbury-ſquare; and at the George, in Eaſt Harding-ſtreet, Fetter-lane, which, being a very commodious room, the noiſe made by the clapping of the ſpeakers, and the late hours kept by the company, occaſioned a complaint, that, being immediately attended to, by a worthy officer of the ward, not far from the ſpot, the club was removed to the Fountain, in Fetter-lane, and again hunted from its new retreat, till they ultimately ſettled at the Scots Arms, in Little Britain, and were as numerouſly attended as at any former period: here they continued the greateſt part of the winter of 1797, but being compelled to leave it, through the magiſtrate's interference, the landlord was afterwards deprived of his licence for entertaining them. Its next ſtage of exiſtence was at the Golden Key, near Moor-lane, Moor-fields; but here it attracted ſo great a concourſe of attendants, that the landlord, dreading the conſequences, warned them away: this was alſo the caſe at another houſe, near Union-ſtreet, Moorfields; till, adjoining to the Britiſh Wine-houſe, near Hoxton, beyond the limits of the city-officers, they carried on their diſquiſitions, near two months, without meeting with any new embarraſſment.

In the interval, between the ſpring of 1795 and the period laſt ſpoken of, ſeveral other ſocieties, upon a ſmaller ſcale, had been ſet on foot: one of theſe, the next, in point of promiſe, to that of the Green Dragon, was intitled, "The Moral and Political Society," who, like the former, converted their place of meeting, near Bunhill-row, into a Debating-room. A few revolutionary pamphlets, written and printed at the ſociety's

expence, were publiſhed, during the interval to which I have alluded.

Similar meetings were alſo held at a public houſe, near Grub-ſtreet; and another, near the quarters of Moorfields.

Another, and one of the laſt places of any note for the exhibition of infidelity, in the eaſtern diſtrict, was at a Hair-dreſſer's in the High-ſtreet, Shoreditch, where a theological queſtion was debated, on a Sunday evening; but, as no money was taken at the door, the law, then in force, was evaded.

Several other ſmall branches ſpread themſelves in the neighbourhood of Whitechapel, Spital-fields, and Hoxton; but were not of ſufficient notoriety, or duration, to merit much attention.

The Weſt end of the metropolis, having in the mean while attained to a degree of rivalſhip, in conſequence of an aſſociation, in Wells-ſtreet, Oxford-road, where the members were permitted to recite their own productions; and another, on a Sunday evening, much more numerouſly attended, *viz.* the Angel, in Cecil-court, St. Martin's Lane. Thoſe neareſt the city were, in ſome meaſure, deſerted; but, as they cloſed their debates ſooner than thoſe at the weſt end of the town, ſome of the ſpeakers contrived to exhibit at two places on the ſame night: even the weather preſented but few obſtacles. The viſionary expectation of a new order of things, it is preſumed, often vibrated from the imaginations of the leading members to their fingers ends, and rendered them leſs ſenſible of the operations of the elements than the vulgar herd.

The Wells-ſtreet Society being diſſolved, in conſequence of ſome diſagreement among the members, the whole focus of Deiſm and Atheiſm

was

was concentrated at the Angel, in Cecil-court, St. Martin's Lane, where a mingled diſplay of real talent and miſerable imitation was continued, on the Sunday and Wedneſday evenings, till February, 1798; when, without any previous notice from the Weſtminſter-magiſtrates, as had been cuſtomary in the city, a period was put to this promiſing ſchool; the whole of the members, *and others* preſent, being apprehended, and, the next day, obliged to find ſureties for their appearance, to anſwer any complaint, at the next Quarter-Seſſion, at Guildhall, Weſtminſter; but no bill being found, the buſineſs ended with the withdrawing of the recognizances of the parties, 57 in number; which would certainly have been doubled, if the police-officers, ſent to apprehend the club, had ſtayed till the buſineſs of the evening had commenced.

This meeting was then deemed wholly political! an idea which could have no other foundation than the ſilly appellation of *citizen*, made uſe of by the members; or the circumſtance of its being attended by John Binns, who was apprehended, about the ſame period this ſociety was diſturbed, in company with Arthur O'Connor, in Kent. This unexpected ſtroke of juſtice, however, put the laſt hand to the Sunday-night meetings, at the weſt end of the town; the aſſociators in that quarter, after holding a few thin ſittings, at a houſe near Compton-ſtreet, Soho, being completely diſperſed. Previous to the eſtabliſhment of the club at this place, another had been continued a conſiderable time, on a Wedneſday evening, at a public houſe, the corner of Long-Acre, oppoſite Newport-Market. Here, as well as at the other places, the queſtions agitated were partly religious, and partly political.

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In all theſe places, where anti-religious opinions were ſtated, it was ſurpriſing to obſerve how ſtrongly their novelty attracted the public mind. The perfection to which the orators had attained, by a long practice, was ſuch, that had commodious apartments been opened in any of the neighbourhoods, occupied by working people, their can be no doubt of their commanding large auditories. The zeal and energy of the ſpeakers, as there were few, very few, whoſe judgement was matured by time, had alſo great weight in making converts; for, among the lower orders of people, an extemporaneous harangue, againſt the miniſters of religion, had an effect not eaſily imagined. This was particularly noticeable about Spitalfields, when, as the French ſyſtem of politics inſenſibly attached itſelf to the auxiliary ideas of propheſies, fulfilling on the Continent, it would be difficult to ſay, where the effects would have ceaſed, had time been given to obtain that conſiſtence wiſhed for by the viſionary movers of thoſe irritable bodies.

It may be objected, that theſe clubs were only frequented by low and obſcure characters; but ſuch, it may be remembered, were Maſſinello, the Fiſherman of Naples, the Cobler of Meſſina, and many others: though the objection does not altogether lie againſt the ſocieties in queſtion. They were, for a time, ſanctioned by ſome perſons above the common rank, by their fortunes and profeſſions in life. Among theſe, a ſingnlar character uſed to be remarked, being in the habit of attending in a large round hat, nearly the ſize of an umbrella, bordered with gold-lace; and he had other eccentricities, which he uſed to vary according to caprice. And to fortune and talents, might be added, an enthuſiaſm capable of rouſing

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the moſt inſenſate to act againſt what was deemed a *ſpiritual tyranny*, in the compulſory payment of church-rates, to the amount of a few pence per week! A favourite theme with ſome of the club-orators; with one of whom, it uſed to be a common-place obſervation, that, "*There* "*could not be a more awfuller ſight in the world,* "*than to ſee a Biſhop rolling about in his cha-* "*riot.*" Of another of theſe enthuſiaſts it was mentioned, "That it was with difficulty he could "reſtrain the moſt violent feelings, whenever the "preſent Archbiſhop of Canterbury paſſed under "his window." After theſe traits of club-characters, and among men with whom *private aſſaſſination* was looked upon as no crime, one might think, that even what has been contemptuouſly called the *pop-gun* plot did not deſerve that air of incredibility and myſtery thrown upon it by ſome writers.

Still as the reins were then held by government, very little was to be feared from any overt-acts among theſe deſcriptions; though, if their temporary ebullitions of zeal could be deemed a fair criterion, this negative obedience might be imputed more to a want of power than of will. Vain glory, and a blind reſentment, as ſilly as it is ſavage, often hurry men into the wildeſt extremes.—I am an Atheiſt! exclaimed one of thoſe perſons, and, jumping upon a club-room table; here, ſaid he, holding up an infant, here is a young Atheiſt! Another, to ſhew how little he regarded the Bible, obſerved, at another meeting, "That "juſt before he came from home, he kicked ſome-"thing before him, and, picking it up, what "ſhould it be but an old Bible; that, till then, "he did not know he had any ſuch thing in his "houſe!" A third philoſopher, cenſuring the preſent

preſent mode of education, obſerved, " There " would never be any good done, till towns and " cities were built without a ſingle church, cha- " pel, or any place of worſhip, in them!" Another member, being weary of the deliberations at which he was preſent, exclaimed, " *What ſignifies our " ſitting here? let us go and kill all the bl—dy " prieſts!*"

I mention theſe inſtances, only as the effects of a party ſpirit, breathing ſentiments by no means natural, but merely forced from the hot-beds of the clubs.

It ſhould be obſerved, that as apprentices were admitted into theſe aſſemblies; and, according to the modern notions of equality, eligible to the chair; ſo ſudden a tranſition, from domeſtic inferiority to profeſſional importance, often turned a weak head: and, if the ſame extremities had been proceeded to as the religious fanatics of the laſt age were engaged in, the London apprentices might again have diſtinguiſhed themſelves, and the cry of *no king* followed that of *no biſhop*, as a natural conſequence.

But in hinting at a parallel between modern democratic zeal and the fanaticiſm of the ſixteenth century; of the latter I ought to beg pardon.—A degree of monſtroſity, ſufficient to make any humanized being ſhudder, ſeems to have been reſerved for the Engliſh Clubbiſts and *Anti-Religioniſts* of later times.—I allude to a common toaſt, which uſed to be received among them with acclamation, *viz.*

" *May the laſt King be ſtrangled in the bowels of the " laſt Prieſt!!!*"

In aſcribing ſo much of this intemperate zeal to party-ſpirit, youth, and inexperience, every candid

candid mind will acquit me of any charge of partiality or misrepresentation. An observation of Mr. Neckar's may probably confirm the propriety of the present application, by exhibiting a striking similarity between the modern Freethinkers in France and those in England: "We "now reckon, says he, among those who oppose "a contemptuous smile to religious opinions, a "multitude of young people, often incapable of "supporting the most trivial arguments; and who, "perhaps, could not connect two or three abstract "propositions: these pretended philosophers art-"fully, and almost perfidiously, take advantage "of the first flight of self-love, to persuade be-"ginners, that they are able to judge, at a glance, "of the serious questions which have eluded the "penetration of the most exercised thinkers."

Instead then of reckoning, as many persons have done, upon the total abolition of Christianity, and fondly anticipating the *acquirements* of the next generation, as wholly Infidel, it should have been made a question, Whether the present generation of the French will retain its Infidel principles after its judgment is matured, and the hey-day of revolutions has subsided?

But, to return: at the same time that all these energies were called forth in the clubs, it became another branch of the duty of the members, and their partizans, to attend, perplex, and harrass, by all possible means, the itinerant preachers, in the vicinity of town. For instance, during the summer, of 1797, a very formidable party were organized, and assembled, every Sunday morning, at seven o'clock, near the City-road: here, in consequence of the debates, forced upon the preachers or the hearers, several groupes of people would remain upon the ground till noon, giving an op-

portunity to the unwary paſſengers to become acquainted with the dogmas of Voltaire, Paine, and other writers, of whom they might have remained in ignorance; in fact, the fields were reſorted to, by the new reformers, upon the ſame principle as a ſportſman goes in queſt of game:—"We ſhall be ſure to find ſome Chriſtians in "the fields" was the ſtanding reaſon for theſe excurſions.

So indefatigable were theſe propagandiſts in their labours, that, beſides their attendance on the Sunday morning, in conſequence of which the groupes would remain till noon, they were again aſſembled from three or four in the afternoon; and, if the weather permitted, retained till eleven at night; and this not in one but various parts of the environs of this metropolis. The cavilling parties, engaged in this buſineſs, demurred at no diſtance of place; being as ready to attend at Hoxton, Hackney, or Hornſey, as at their own doors. One of theſe bodies, I was afterwards informed, uſed to meet, every Sunday morning, in a garden near Bethnal-green, and, after ſpending ſome time in reading and commenting upon Paine's Age of Reaſon, diſtributed themſelves for the purpoſes above-mentioned.

In fine, this oppoſition from Deiſts and Atheiſts was carried to ſuch extremes, that, in 1798, the magiſtrates were compelled to put a partial ſtop to field-preaching; till that period, as common and habitual in the eaſtern ſuburbs, as it had been in Moorfields, previous to the erection of Finſbury-ſquare. A meaſure prompted intirely, by the advantages taken by the Infidel party, to propagate their abſurd opinions with more effect.

In addition to the redoubtable army beforementioned, marſhalled for every kind of attack, both

both within and beyond the ſphere of the clubs, a number of ſtraggling auxiliaries might be reckoned upon, who were drawn together by the noiſe and alarm of the Field-Diſputants. Theſe conſiſted of Myſtics, Muggletonians, Millennaries, and a variety of eccentric characters of different denominations: I call them auxiliaries, becauſe, their ridiculous mode of defending, or enforcing, their different tenets only increaſed the objections to the Chriſtian Belief, in the minds of thoſe perſons before unhinged by the ſubtleties of Infidels; and thus, unintentionally, an additional weight was thrown into the ſcale of the common enemy, by thoſe who had a zeal, but not according to knowledge. Among the latter, were two preachers, called *Jew-Quakers*, from the circumſtance of their having but one beard between them; one ſhaving the *upper*, the other the *under*, lip only: to theſe may be added, a Bird-catcher, and a Baſket-maker, both well known as Holders-forth, and, of courſe, having their admirers.

All theſe groteſque characters, the Deiſts and Atheiſts, juſtly conſidered as ſo many Punchinellos, whom thoſe who held the wires behind the ſcenes might play off, as beſt ſuited their purpoſe; a poſition which a ſuperficial obſerver might not immediately perceive: but I recollect an inſtance, in the ſummer of 1798, at the concluſion of a Field-ſermon, when it was remarked, that, the Deiſts did not oppoſe the Arian preachers with the ſame virulence as the Trinitarians. The full force of the obſervation was admitted, while it was urged, as a reaſon for this forbearance, that, the Infidels conſidered the Arians as doing a part of their buſineſs for them.

But beſides the fields, and the diviſion-rooms, the Infidel-propagandiſts made uſe of another me-

dium for ſpreading their principles, in which they were but too ſucceſsful: this was in the various Benefit-Societies, within the circle of the metropolis. Here, after the buſineſs of the evening was over, the diſciple of Paine was ſure to introduce the ſubject of religion; and, by theſe means, ſeveral copies of the Age of Reaſon were circulated, from the reading of which many of its victims dated their *converſion*.

But this inſiduous mode of introducing the Age of Reaſon having been ſucceſsfully reſiſted by ſome of the Benefit-Societies, who have complained to the magiſtrates of ſuch diſorderly members; the latter, finding their temporal intereſts at ſtake, and not being inclined, by the new philoſophy, to ſacrifice *principle* for *intereſt*, it is ſuppoſed, will act with more cunning in future; it being through diſſimulation alone, and that kind of it, which a Chriſtian would diſdain, by which theſe obnoxious members have eſcaped the eraſement of their names from the books of the Society, and, perhaps, in more than one inſtance, engaged the magiſtrates to prevent their excluſion.

The introduction of democratic ſongs was another part of the duty of theſe political miſſionaries; but their talents were not confined to Benefit-Clubs, their buſineſs was to worm themſelves into convivial ſocieties of every kind; where, though ſcuffles have frequently enſued, theſe delegates have often ſucceeded in erecting a party, or an intereſt, which, otherwiſe, would not have had an exiſtence.

Upon the whole, the diſguſting licentiouſneſs, coarſeneſs, and brutal indelicacy, too frequently apparent in thoſe field-diſputations, more than counteracted every degree of utility attending them. It has

has ſeveral times occurred, that, when two perſons, rather ſeriouſly inclined, have been diſcuſſing the attributes of the Deity, a third has abruptly interfered, with what he has ſuppoſed to have been a ſhrewd queſtion, *viz.* "How do you know there is any God at all?"

Having now done with the delineation of theſe diſtortured features of humanity, I ſhall now proceed to give an account of the eſtabliſhment of a place of public inſtruction; always an important object with the Infidel Illuminati. The next chapter will therefore ſhew how far that eſtabliſhment was founded upon a judicious or a fanatical eſtimate.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Upon the opening of a Temple of Reaſon in the Spring of 1796.

IT had long been a favourite idea of the Club-Orators, and Field-Miſſionary Diſputants, that exhibited upon a proper ſtage of action, their eloquence would be irreſiſtible. Favoured by the French Revolution, they fondly imagined the time, for the exploſion of the whole fabric of Chriſtianity, had at length arrived; and that, to convert all ſects from the abſurdity of Chriſtian notions, nothing was wanting but the opportunity which then preſented itſelf, for proclaiming the *beauties of nature*, and *unaſſiſted reaſon* to the world at large. Fluſhed with theſe expectations, a committee was ſelected to meet at a public houſe, in Jewin-ſtreet; when, after a few adjourned ſittings, being aſſiſted by two gentlemen of the law, ſomething like a ſociety was organized; a fund adequate to the undertaking was depoſited, and the name of the aſſociation agreed upon, to be that of the *Friends of Morality*. To keep up the ſpirit of this inſtitution, it was ordered, that no perſon ſhould be admitted, unleſs known ſome months, by more than one of the members, and that excluſion ſhould follow any act of immorality; but in conſequence of the trouble that ſeemed likely to enſue upon the adoption of this regulation, theſe modern Cato's were ſoon com-

pelled to give up a meaſure, at firſt conceived to be indiſpenſibly neceſſary to ſupport the character of this new eſtabliſhment.

It being juſtly conceived that every member was not qualified to deliver lectures in public, it ſoon became an object of high debate, in the committee, whether the lecturers ſhould or ſhould not be paid for their labours. And as any reſemblance to the allowance of a ſtipend to a real or nominal ſuperior was looked upon as rank ſuperſtition, or of ariſtocratic tendency, it required all the influence of the two lawyers, to induce the majority of the members to agree to a clauſe in their articles, to allow half a guinea to each lecturer, by way of compenſation for his trouble.

A committee of managers was alſo appointed; but a card and ſome emblematic divice being found a neceſſary appendage, an engraver belonging to the body was employed, who produced a plate, exhibiting Truth with a ſpeculum in her hand, concentrating her rays upon the figure of Error, recumbent upon the ground. Some of the committee, whoſe taſte was not congenial to the fine arts, thought the charge of half-a-guinea moſt exorbitant, while others ſuppoſed that the artiſt, being a member, ſhould have contributed the aſſiſtance of his talents without fee or reward.

After ſeveral fruitleſs attempts to procure a commodious place of meeting, owing to a variety of objections from the perſons applied to, Nichols's ſale-room, in Whitecroſs-ſtreet, being taken at a rent of twenty pounds per annum: by the contributions and labour of ſome of the members, it was ſoon furniſhed with ſeats, a tribune, &c. Books being the next object; to accommodate ſuch perſons as choſe to read before the Sunday lectures commenced, the members were called upon to contribute

contribute their ſtock for the public good, particularly ſuch works as militated moſt ſtrongly againſt Chriſtianity; but it ſo happened, for want of better knowledge, that ſome of the books ſent into the depoſitory, were written in its behalf! A circumſtance ſomething like the conduct of ſome of the rioters in 1780, who being called upon to go to ſuch a houſe, as they were *Catholics* there, replied, "What are Catholics to us? We are only againſt "*Popery*!"

After this room was opened, and looked upon, *bona fide*, as a Temple of Reaſon, the opening being announced by the poſting of bills, it was imagined that the ſuperiority of Infidelity would inevitably appear. The hopes of the leaders were equal to any thing, and ſome of them, almoſt perſuaded themſelves, they were the very perſons deſignated by Dr. Prieſtley, but a few years before, for the important and momentous purpoſe of ſetting fire to the train ſo long accumulating under the Eſtabliſhed Church, from the ſucceſſive contributions of inflammable matter, by Arians, Socinians, and other Schiſmatics. From this opinion, and the promiſing æra of preaching the doctrines of Deiſm, &c. in the fields, which was partly contemporary; an æra, which appeared to have been reſerved for the year 1796, portentous of the Millennium of Infidelity, and of which, the newly-opened Temple of Reaſon was viewed as the immediate forerunner. It was therefore not ſtrange that the moſt active members ſhould expect to have their names handed down to poſterity, as the reſtorers of religious liberty, which was firſt to eradicate ſuperſtition and ſlavery from this iſland, and afterwards, ſupported by the French Revolution, make the tour of Chriſtendom.

Reſpecting

Reſpecting the external economy of this new Temple, as the acts of prayer and praiſe were expreſſly excluded, the defects of ſolemnity or impreſſion upon the attendants may eaſily be conjectured. Simple as the worſhip of the Quakers, without their gravity, ſingularity in dreſs, &c. each perſon that mounted the roſtrum ſeemed rather to be trying his talents than employed in any ſerious undertaking; and, while the doctrines of the new philoſophy, as far as they related to morality, were much too general to ſuit any particular purpoſe, the feelings of the impartial hearer, who juſtly expected the *new* religion would ſuperſede the *old*, were invariably thoſe of ſurprize and diſappointment.

It was the endeavour of the moſt rational members, to confine the lecturers to the delivery of their ſentiments upon morality, abſtractedly, without reference to Chriſtianity, or any other ſyſtem: but this the majority of the members oppoſed, well perſuaded, that, deprived of the moſt copious themes of argument, or rather declamation, they would entirely loſe the command over the paſſions of their auditors, and, of courſe, become more inſipid and unintereſting than any of the profeſſions they were determined to condemn.

This being the temper of the chiefs of this new Temple of Reaſon, the lectures there delivered were generally compiled from the writings of Voltaire, David Williams, and other authors, diſtinguiſhed for their rancour or prejudices againſt Chriſtianity. As for the decorum, indiſpenſably neceſſary in every kind of worſhip, or public inſtruction, the ſtrangers that attended this inſtitution could not be leſs influenced by it, than the members themſelves; as, from the opening of the place, from ten in the morning till one, and

on the Sunday afternoon, till the moment of the commencement of the lectures, the time was invariably ſpent in ſarcaſtic or facetious converſation, acroſs the tables, between the members; and, from the noiſy approbation this entertainment occaſionally produced, it was difficult to determine, whether amuſement or aſtoniſhment preponderated in the minds of the audience at large.

As theſe boaſted philoſophers were ignorant of the force of motives, and of ſuch doctrines as influence the minds of individuals, it was not unaccountable, that a laxity of attendance among the members ſoon produced a ſimilar diſpoſition in ſtrangers; ſo that, notwithſtanding the additional notice which the place attracted, in conſequence of a diſturbance by ſome intruders, and the ſtatement of their examination at one of the police offices, in ſome of the daily papers, the ſociety, finding all their declamations "waſted upon the deſert air," at length agreed to ſhut up the Temple till a more convenient ſeaſon; for, at that period, it was not thought impoſſible but that, in a few months, the preſſure of external circumſtances, and the co-operation of the New Apoſtleſhip, might occaſion the converſion of St. Paul's Cathedral into a Temple of Reaſon! No one foreſeeing, that, in the ſummer of 1799, the Theophilanthropic Temple, at Paris, would ſhare the fate of its humble imitator at Nichols's ſale-room in Whitecroſs-Street, notwithſtanding the ſupport of Thomas Paine and other eminent characters.

Theſe uncontroled experiments upon the lower orders of ſociety in this country, among whom credulity is ever the ſtrongeſt, muſt completely invalidate the plea of Infidels againſt the reſtraint of the civil law, and the old pretence, that Chriſti-

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anity is obliged to the ſecular arm for its ſupport.

It may be aſked, what power reſtricted the Theophilanthropiſts in the performance of their worſhip at Paris? The government was not only in their favour, but the public mind had been training for years for the reception of their notions, from the writings of the whole tribe of French Atheiſts, in which, as Mr. Courtenay obſerves, a conſtellation of genius ſeemed united. Theſe Atheiſtical tenets, he juſtly remarked, were diffuſed in every ſpecies of writing, and the dulcet poiſon was greedily imbibed in every part of Europe. The moſt poignant ridicule, the fineſt ſallies of wit, and the moſt brilliant traits of imagination, threw a falſe luſtre over this deceptious ſyſtem; the pernicious dogmas of their ſchool captivated the attention, and were conveyed to the heart in the enchanting page of a novel, amidſt the feigned adventures and paſſionate endearments of lovers. But the luminous ſcrutinizing genius of Monteſquiou, the ſplendid levity of Voltaire, the impaſſioned and faſcinating eloquence of Rouſſeau, the preciſion and depth of D'Alembert, the bold and acute inveſtigations of Boulanger, the daring paradoxical ſpirit of Helvetius, the majeſtic ſublimity of Buffon, the profound aſtronomic reſearches of Baille, the captivating elegance of Marmontel, and the impreſſive condenſed thoughts of Diderot, *have not*, as the gentleman concludes, "*unſettled the conſecrated opinions of ages*, nor ſhaken the venerable gothic ſtructure from its *very foundation*." For, on the contrary, this many-twinkling meteor of Infidelity, after blazing its hour, has paled before the milder radiance and commanding luſtre of the goſpel luminary, the doctrines of which, are not extraneous, but congenial to human nature.

The new philoſophy, it is granted, may adorn the head, but theſe ennoble the heart. This wiſdom may be allowed to bear the impreſſion of human reaſon, but it will never paſs current with weak and wounded humanity! It is formidable in books, but contemptible in life: in argument ſtrong; in practice weak: a coin which may be kept for ſhew, but not for uſe: it is a counterfeit, and its detection, by the ſtandard of experience, now enables us to ſay, with a confidence approaching to mathematical demonſtration, and oracular authenticity:

"*Thou art weighed in the balance, and found wanting.*"

Yes, ye Atheiſts, it is true that our minds were confined in a narrow region, while our imaginations were delighted with the ſmiling heavens above, and the rich diverſity beneath. But what have we obtained of *you* in exchange? To the fruitful, though bounded view of hill and dale, has ſucceeded the immeaſurable deſert! Amazement was our firſt ſenſation at the magnitude of the proſpect; but now our eyes are appalled, and our hearts ſicken at the ſameneſs of the ſcene. Here the heavens above are as braſs, and the earth as iron beneath our feet. Our ears are torn by the ſcreaming of the bittern, or alarmed by the howling of the beaſts of prey. *The voice of the turtle is not heard in this land, and the time for ſinging birds never comes.*

But again, to advert to the hiſtory of this grand failure of Infidelity; that the fatal experiment was not tried upon a much larger ſcale, is not to be imputed to the want of will in the perſons engaged, but to the ſalutary prevention which originated in another quarter: for no ſooner was the opening of the place laſt deſcribed known in the country,

country, than a notice was given in that aſſembly, "That if any perſon, qualified as a teacher, could "make it convenient to leave town, a Society, at "one of the Weſtern ports, could inſure him from "150*l.* to 200*l.* per annum." Nor is it ſtraining any probability to ſuppoſe, that every aſſembly of this nature would eventually have formed itſelf into a political body, the conſequences muſt then have been obvious.

The project for diſtributing the miſſionaries of Deiſm and Democracy about the country, it ſeems, had certainly been acted upon, to a certain degree, anterior to the period I have juſt alluded to, when, as the Biſhop of London obſerves in one of his Lordſhip's charges to his clergy, *that, to his knowledge, the Age of Reaſon had been circulated among the miners in Cornwall.* A degree of miſchievous induſtry, unknown to the original propagandiſts of the continent, whoſe impious labours, as far as I have heard, terminated upon the *ſurface* of the *earth!* But of the former it may be ſaid,

"That when on earth they could no farther go,
"They ſpread the miſchief in the realms below!"

CHAP. IV.

Upon the common Prejudices in Favour of Debating Clubs; and the immediate Influence of the late Aſſociations, upon the Families and Connections of their Members.

PERHAPS the long practice of agitating civil and religious ſubjects, in various ſocieties, has lent too much ſtrength to the hitherto prevailing opinion, that ſuch verbal diſcuſſions did certainly tend to the eſtabliſhment of truth, and the detection of error. But ſpeaking from long experience, at leaſt, ever ſince Infidelity has been at iſſue with the eſtabliſhed religion of the country, theſe ſalutary effects have been ſo few, as to be ſcarcely perceptible.

Indeed, the majority of attendants upon theſe places, both of former, as well as recent date, have been led, by ſucceſſive gradations, to doubt of the very fundamentals before admitted! And he that began with ſcruples, concerning ſome parts of revelation, has commonly ended with queſtioning the exiſtence of a God! Thus Circe transformed men into beaſts, but Atheiſm converts them into monſters.

The ſuppoſition of a candid diſcuſſion in theſe aſſemblies is a mere farce; for in proportion as party-ſpirit enlarges its ſphere of action, candour is uniformly joſtled out of its place. The number of hands held up, for or againſt a queſtion, is always more attended to, than the weight of the arguments

guments in its favour; nor has any kind of ridicule been ſpared by the Infidels to enſure ſucceſs over the Chriſtians, when other means have proved abortive.

It has been intimated before, that the London Correſponding Society, by adding Deiſm to its politics, engendered the ſeeds of its own deſtruction: and, in fact, many of the leading orators, as if they were aware of going too far, after depreciating the character of the Saviour, in their harangues, uſed frequently to add the ridiculous aſſertion, "That they believed Jeſus Chriſt was a "good republican." This miſchievous levity, this ſuperficial diſpoſition, was carried into every ſcene of private, as well as public life. Having no taſte but for ſcandal and declamation, among the multiplicity of publications which they ſanctioned, no work upon the relative duties, no work inculcating moral or religious obligations to virtue, was either called for, or made its appearance. Volney's Law of Nature, or Catechiſm of Reaſon, publiſhed by Eaton, is the only exception to this charge: but as an unerring indication of Infidel propenſities, in a hundred houſes furniſhed with Paine's Age of Reaſon, the former was not once to be found! Neither Plato, Socrates, nor Antoninus, though praiſed by Voltaire, had any charms for the turbulent diſciples of Paine and Mirabaud: and hence the advice of a parent or maſter, for the want of ſome ſtanding rule or authority, is generally weak and ineffectual; a deficiency frequently increaſed by the difference of opinion between a man and his wife. The woman, we will ſuppoſe, even from habit, prefers ſeeing her children dreſſed, and at church, on a Sunday; but not to diſoblige her *enlightened* huſband, who has read the Age of Reaſon, this is a point ſhe

gives

gives up; the children remain all the forenoon in their every day dreſs, or ſtray into the fields, where they contract vicious habits; and thus, all the obligations that reſult from a place of public worſhip; the influence of a copious hiſtory of ſtriking examples, and the ſanctity and authority of ages is loſt and evaded. But if a diſpoſition for reading is in any degree indulged, the ſublimity of the ſacred Scriptures is perhaps bartered for the effuſions of ſome ſuperficial or political pamphleteer!

In fact, the whole ſyſtem of domeſtic economy ſeems reverſed, by the introduction of deiſtical notions. I have obſerved, that the heads of many induſtrious families, who, previous to their *illumination*, made it an indiſpenſible duty to appear *abroad* decently dreſſed on a Sunday, would afterwards not only remain the whole day in their working dreſſes, to ſhew their contempt of the *Chriſtian Sabbath*, but ſpend it *at home* in ſottiſhneſs and ſtupidity. And yet Paine's Age of Reaſon, Godwin's Political Juſtice, &c. have remained upon their ſhelves, and full in the ſight of their poſſeſſors during the whole time! Others, who before, were honeſt and frugal, have become knaviſh and luxurious; and while their tables were covered with all the varieties of the ſeaſon, could, without ſcruple of conſcience, defraud their poorer neighbours of their juſt dues. In other inſtances, ſelf-murder has put a period to theſe fatal deviations from order and decency. Thus the minds, even of adults, after ſoaring for a ſhort period in the vacuity which they were taught to conſider as an enlightened region, undetermined what object to alight upon, have ſunk at length into the muddy pools of vice; or having nothing more to hope for, embraced that dreary ſcepticiſm which cannot promiſe a ſafe conduct through this temporary exiſtence:

iſtence; from hence, theſe unhappy ſubjects have not unfrequently fallen into a ſituation ſo truly deplorable as to baffle every remedy, but have lived the aſtoniſhment of all who knew their wanderings, and died without regret!

Inſtead then, of the Millennium, which modern Infidels had promiſed themſelves from the number of their converts, what has been the conſequence? Their public and private efforts have equally failed; and, laſtly, a number of their members have left them ſpontaneouſly, convinced that their notions upon matters of faith could never be attended with any wholeſome effects; a mode of conduct, as I have before obſerved, ſimilar to that of many members of the once famed Robin Hood Society. Nor is there any thing which an Infidel ought to dread more than the reaction of his own principles upon himſelf, from his inferiors or his dependants: I have known a recent inſtance of a ſervant refuſing to pay a juſt debt to his maſter; and, in reply to his reproof for ſuch conduct, he pleaded his maſter's pre-inſtructions! The latter it ſeems, had made him his companion to the Clubs, and had frequently told him, "There was no account to be taken hereafter of actions in this life."

There was another ſpecies of inconſiſtency, which materially checked the diſſemination of Infidel opinions in private families; that is to ſay, the propenſity of ſeveral individuals to attend places of Chriſtian Worſhip, though in the conſtant habit of declaiming againſt them all! When ſuch perſons were aſked the reaſon of this conduct, their anſwers generally were, that they went merely for amuſement, or, that the Preachers making excellent moral diſcourſes, they ſuppoſed no harm could be taken; a tacit confeſſion of the weakneſs of their own fundamentals: but not reſting here, this pro-

duced a ſtrong propenſity in their children or ſervants to doubt their ſincerity in other reſpects, and frequently gave the whole of their objections againſt Chriſtianity the caſt and colour of prejudice. Now theſe involuntary teſtimonies to the natural power of religion upon the human mind, may be urged ſo far as to prove, that while Deiſts and Atheiſts are appealing to *Nature* for the juſtification of their irreligious opinions, that ſame *Nature*, is confirming the truth of the Chriſtian ſyſtem, by compelling them, as it were, to ſanction certain acts of divine worſhip, in ſpite of their opinions, and the ſyſtem they profeſs

Naturam expellas furcâ, tamen uſque recurret.

Theſe charges I preſume, belong to that claſs of facts, which no ſophiſtry can remove; but, as many of them will neceſſarily appear new, not having been urged by former writers againſt Deiſm, let it be remembered, that Infidelity having never gained ſo much ground before, among the common people, the ſcope of obſervation was proportionately narrowed: for, till the Age of Reaſon was adopted by the political ſocieties in the metropolis, Deiſm, to ſay nothing of Atheiſm, was rather the affair of a few iſolated individuals, than, as it has been ſince that period, the concern of a conſiderable part of the community. Another inſtance of the weakneſs and inferiority of modern infidelity is, that manifeſt want of paſſive, or ſuffering, virtue, which ſeems to be a natural reſult of the laxity of its principles. The Infidels therefore, had they continued a riſing ſect, could never have been formidable; paſſive virtue, in a civil or a religious body, being the ſame as diſcipline in an army: wanting it, both would act without energy, or be ſubject to a ſpeedy diſſolution.

tion. How unlike, then, are theſe philoſophers to the *Original* Quakers, whom they are fond of propoſing as a model to other Chriſtian denominations! Theſe Quakers, raiſed themſelves into conſequence by cheriſhing the virtue, in which their modern panegyriſts are moſt deficient: the true ground of their increaſe was a perſeverance, ariſing from motives univerſally diſcountenanced by Deiſts and Atheiſts, that is to ſay, a hope of reward beyond the preſent life.

In all the recent declamations againſt the Chriſtian Religion, it is a principal charge that its miniſters are the moſt ſordid and temporizing beings upon earth. But how ſtands it with their accuſers? As far as facts can ſpeak for themſelves, I anſwer, that, when their domeſtic concerns, or ſincerity in what they profeſs, does, as occaſion offers, demand any ſacrifice of *intereſt; principle* is generally given up in its room, with very little ſcruple; an aſſertion, which if neceſſary, could be juſtified by a number of inſtances. Chriſtianity, on the contrary, daily exhibits its nobler ſacrifices of a *preſent* for a *future* good; a virtue ariſing from a temper totally incompatible with the Infidel ſyſtem, which admits of nothing beyond time and ſenſe, and thus excludes the poſſibility of exerciſing this duty towards man; and a due confidence in the Creator. Of the philoſophers, it has been juſtly ſaid;

———"*Ils ont l'art de detruire,*
Mais ils n'élevent rien."

Proceeding upon theſe falſe principles, while modern Infidels have promiſed themſelves happineſs and unanimity in their families, diſcord has followed. Among others of this claſs, the man who has taught his children to avoid a place of worſhip, as a place

of infection, will nevertheleſs ſend them to Church, if education and an annual ſuit (for which he could pay) are the conditions of their attendance; or rather than his new-born infant ſhould loſe the preſent of a frock, the good graces of a godmother and a few goſſips, he will ſubmit to have it baptized, and ſtill continue to upbraid Chriſtians, as the moſt abſurd and inconſiſtent beings in the univerſe!

Another, if a place is to be obtained under government, has no objection to receive the Sacrament as a qualification; and thus it happens that modern Infidelity inſtead of reforming, tends to increaſe the number of hypocrites!

As a farther proof of their proſtitution of conſcientious rectitude, a recent inſtance has occurred of the diſappointment of a Benefit Society, in their wiſh to exclude a member for boring them with Paine's Age of Reaſon; and who, much to their aſtoniſhment, to obviate their complaints, did not refuſe to take an oath before a magiſtrate, and to profeſs his belief of that Bible which it had been his conſtant endeavour to diſcredit!

From ſuch temporizing conduct in parents and maſters of families, what muſt be the inferences of the children? Will they regard the precepts which are continually at variance with the practice of thoſe who recommend them? Certainly, whenever the Infidel attempts to realize his theories, he betrays the moſt confirmed ignorance of human nature. A want of ſympathy and commiſſeration is alſo a common failing with theſe pretenders, who have at the ſame time ſome theory or other, conſtantly in their heads for leſſening the evils in ſociety—which defect may perhaps be imputed to the ſyſtem of fataliſm, pretty general among them. If an Infidel refuſe to contribute to the neceſſities of his brother, he may tell you he has no motive,

not being a *free agent;* and in this caſe may laugh at any reply that can be made to his objection. To inſiſt upon the ſuperiority of the Chriſtian Religion, which ſuggeſts ſuch a variety of motives for repeated acts of humanity and benevolence, would be needleſs; I ſhall, however, ſtate one inſtance: a perſon, known as a profeſſor of religion, being ſolicited to join with others for the relief of a third perſon, confined for a ſmall debt, at firſt ſtarted ſeveral objections; but, ſaid the ſolicitor, ſuch a one, and ſuch a one, have come forward, and can *you as a Chriſtian* refuſe to contribute? This being an argument *ad hominem*, which he was unable to reſiſt, he gave liberally. But as the *Book of Nature*, ſo much boaſted of by Deiſts, is not ſo expreſs upon this ſubject as the *Book of Revelation*, ſuch an appeal as I have juſt cited, cannot be made to an Infidel.

As it muſt be evident to every reflecting mind, that our hopes and fears are the ſtrongeſt motives of all our actions; to expatiate here upon the difference between ancient and modern Deiſm would be unneceſſary. To thoſe not verſed in the ancient Pagan ſyſtems, I ſhall only obſerve, that while *modern* Infidels are too wiſe to admit of any future rewards or puniſhments, the *ancients* had their expiatory ſacrifices, purifications, retributions, and judgment after death. Theſe doctrines, inſtead of deſtroying every medium which could affect the heart, or fix the imagination, preſented and propagated an infinity of ideas and motives of conſideration; while the modern philoſophy, urges and inſiſts upon nothing beyond a *bare probability!* A motive which is often too weak to operate upon diſciplined and exalted minds, and conſequently is not in the leaſt degree qualified to arreſt and fix the groſſer and more perverted apprehenſions of the

profane

profane and vulgar; even the Pagan Polytheiſm, was as much ſuperior to the inanity of modern Infidelity, as Chriſtianity is to both of thoſe ſyſtems.

Thus we have had a ſpecimen of philoſophers, without philoſophy, and reformers, unreformed: men, of whom, in the language of Jude, we may more truly ſay, "Theſe are clouds without water, "carried about by the winds, wandering ſtars, "raging waves of the ſea, murmurers and com-"plainers ſpeaking evil of dignities."

I ſhould have obſerved, when ſpeaking of the inferiority of modern Deiſts and Atheiſts to the ancient Pagans, that the notions of the former have a tendency to render every plan of education, vague and uncertain. For, being anxious to ſuppreſs any idea their children may entertain of a Being, or Beings, ſuperior to men, they are neceſſarily excluded from moſt of the benefits which the imagination derives from works of taſte and the hiſtory of antiquity. The *ſyſtem* of modern Infidelity, if ſuch it may be called, has not the leaſt congeniality either with Polytheiſm, or the Chriſtian Faith. Equally deſpiſing Heroes and Demi-Gods, Saints and Angels; Infidels can never be elevated with exalted ideas of purity or ſuperior excellence: and of courſe, beſides being deprived of the pleaſure of wandering in the flowery fields of uſeful and agreeable fiction, they may loſe all the motives to virtue and piety, which muſic, painting, and poetry, are well known to inculcate.

To every one of theſe degraded mortals, who pride themſelves in being nothing more than mere organizations of matter, this fine appeal of the minſtrel does moſt forcibly apply,

> Oh! how canſt thou renounce the boundleſs ſtore,
> Of charms, which Nature to her vot'ry yields?

The

The warbling woodland, the ſurrounding ſhore,
The pomp of groves, the garniture of fields;
All that the genial ray of morning gilds,
And all that echoes to the ſong of ev'n,
All that the mountain's ſheltring boſom ſhields,
And all the dread magnificence of heaven,
Oh! how can'ſt thou renounce and hope to be forgiven!

BEATTIE.

Thus, all theſe low and obſcure puddles which I have deſcribed, flowing through ſuch a variety of channels, have at length ſettled in the ſtagnant pool of French Atheiſm, which few have paſſed in ſafety, where many have periſhed, and in which many others may plunge, during the term of their exiſtence.

But even this, like the deadly lake of Sodom, has its fruits, goodly to the eye, but mortal to the taſte; and perhaps the ſpecious appearance of Atheiſtic virtues was never more aptly illuſtrated than by the remark made, upon the French philoſophers, by the late Empreſs of Ruſſia. See Profeſſor Robiſon's Proofs of a Conſpiracy, page 52, 53, 54. "*Ces philoſophes*," ſaid ſhe, "*ſont beaux, vus de loin; mais de plus près le diamant parait chryſtal:*" which may be rendered thus, "The actions and ſentiments of theſe philoſophers appear like *brilliants* at a diſtance, but, cloſely inſpected, are nothing beyond *common paſte*."

The natural inanity, froth, and vapour, of theſe philoſophical bodies, have appeared in various inſtances, ſince the period of their viſible decline; the defection of a number of perſons, from the principles they profeſſed, while in a collected ſtate, having proved, that they were only held together by the vociferation of a few flippant leaders, ignorant that *Religion is natural to civilized ſociety*.

It has farther appeared, that many, even while they remained with them, ſo far from being convinced

vinced by Infidel arguments, only wanted ſome perſon upon whoſe judgment they could rely, to bear them out in renouncing the whole, or the principal parts of their new creed. And this recantation, it ſeems, was long declined by others, leſt their *civiſm* ſhould be called in queſtion; *Deiſm* and *Democracy*, as it has been obſerved before, being deemed inſeparable qualifications.

Thus, as in France, ſupported by external agency, the meteor, which they falſely denominated, the Light of Nature, might longer have continued to aſtoniſh the multitude; but even this admiration muſt have ceaſed, when they found its rays afforded no genial warmth; that it led them into a trackleſs void, and, after expoſing them to all the ſtorms of adverſity in this life, left them without hope of recompenſe beyond the grave.

But, of the Chriſtian ſyſtem it has been elegantly ſaid,

"Religion is a gen'rous lively flame,
"That brightens, not deforms, the human frame:
"A lambent light, around the heart it plies,
"Not like a fury, threat'ning in the eyes.
"No ſour reſtraint, no forc'd concern it wears;
"No public ſighs, no oſtentatious tears;
"No ſelf-applauding boaſt, no love of ſtrife;
"No ſpleen againſt the blameleſs joys of life.
"As far from theſe are Piety's ſweet charms;
"As ſettled courage from confus'd alarms;
"As ſolid Reaſon's calm conſiderate train,
"From the wild frenzies of a moon-ſtruck brain."

CHAP. V.

Upon ſeveral recent Cauſes of Scandal upon the Eſtabliſhed Religion.—Uncommon Increaſe of Itinerants.—Lady Ann's Preachers.—Viſiting Preachers at Workhouſes.—Societies for relieving the Poor at their own Habitations.—Character of the late Rev. Mr. Richards, Curate of St. Sepulchres.—Rev. R. Southgate.—Origin of the Swedenborgian Worſhip.—Popiſh Emigrants.

ONE of the principal evils, the ſubject of the preſent complaint, originates in the increaſing and unprecedented number of preachers in what is called the Methodiſtic line, or at leaſt, in the Calviniſtic department of it, patronized by a Lady, the ſuppoſed ſucceſſor, to the Counteſs of Huntingdon, and hence commonly called Lady Ann's preachers. This deſcription, beſides ſuch of them as obtain appointments within doors, are generally to be found haranguing the paſſengers on a Sunday, during the ſummer-ſeaſon, in the Spa-Fields, or in the avenues leading to Iſlington, Hackney, &c. moſt of them beardleſs boys, and mechanics or labourers by profeſſion, whoſe ignorance of their mother-tongue is not to be equalled, ſince the buſineſs of out-door preaching was *lain* down by Oliver's preachers.

Many of the former, well known to perſons acquainted with them before their metamorphoſis, have contrived to appear out of doors, decorated in a gown, before they were well miſſed from their

ſhop-boards! What qualifications are deemed neceſſary to authorize ſo ſudden a change into a clerical habit I have never been able to learn, unleſs volubility be miſtaken for elocution.

That ſeveral of theſe upſtarts were apprentices at the time they commenced their miniſterial career, particularly one of them, who fancied he was ſent to call the Jews, (in Duke's Place) is a fact notoriouſly known. Hence the moſt nauſeating egotiſm, and the want of every requiſite, except aſſurance, are ſufficient to make religion itſelf (in the eyes of the undiſcerning) acceſſary to its own diſgrace, without the additional ridicule of Deiſts and Atheiſts, who are happy in the opportunities of charging the follies of a few upon the whole profeſſion.

Numbers of the ſame claſs, as to ability, have alſo obtruded themſelves as miſſionaries to foreign parts. One of theſe, now a carman to a tradeſman near Smithfield, was abſolutely ſhipped for Sierra Leona, ſoon after that colony was eſtabliſhed, but was obliged to return in conſequence of a diſagreement with the natives.

Though not generally known, it is no leſs a truth, that ſeveral of the workhouſes, in this metropolis, have been uſed as places of training and exerciſe for, ſome years paſt, by theſe fanatical adventurers. Some of them, for what they term exerciſing *their gifts*, abſolutely give the poor women in theſe houſes a few halfpence, on a Sunday, to purchaſe ſnuff, tea, &c. which is again charged to thoſe who employ the preachers, as a part of their ordinary expences.

At ſome of the workhouſes, according to the diſpoſition of the governors, the viſiting preachers receive ſmall gratifications for their labours; for inſtance, a poor creature, now in the habit of attending Clerkenwell-workhouſe, generally receives a

ing

glaſs of gin, as the reward of his viſit, and is farther allowed the privilege of trucking with his humble auditors for the houſe allowances of pudding, cheeſe, &c. with which he fills his pockets, upon his return home from what he calls his ſermon! This is the ſame perſon mentioned in page 19, in the double capacity of bird-catcher and field-preacher.

Till a regulation happily took place, a few years ſince, ſome men of this character uſed to force themſelves upon the malefactors under ſentence of death. In conformity with the complaint, here advanced, it has been the opinion of ſeveral judicious obſervers of the manners and morals of mankind, "that "great hurt has been done by the fanatical converſation, the viſionary hymns, and the bold and impious applications of the Scriptures, by ſuch "people above deſcribed, when attending condemned malefactors. It cannot be denied that, "in conſequence of the moſt culpable proſtitution "of ſacred things, many daring offenders againſt "law and juſtice have had their paſſions and imaginations ſo worked upon, and have been ſent into "the other world in ſuch raptures, as would much "better become martyrs, innocently ſuffering in a "glorious cauſe, than criminals of the firſt magnitude." In fine, the conduct of theſe *immoral* preachers of *religion* appeared in ſo odious a light, a few years ſince, that it induced the magiſtrates of the city of London to confine the office of attending upon the priſoners in general to the Ordinary of Newgate; but, being refuſed there, I can ſee no reaſon they ſhould gain admittance into the workhouſes.

A poem, called the Literary Cenſus, which I have before me, thus deſcribes ſome of the characters, who are the conſtant means of heaping ſcandal upon the eſtabliſhed religion.

" In terms uncouth, and myſtic phraſe they rave
" Of ſaving faith and faith that cannot ſave,
" The ſpirit's teaching, and the ſpirit's rod,
" And how the Devil over-reaches God;
" How lion-like he ſeeketh to devour,
" And damns more ſouls than grace to ſave has pow'r.
" You'd ſwear, ſo loud their rant, and ſo abſtruſe,
" Bedlam, or Babel's workmen, were let looſe."

In a note to page 88 of this pamphlet, I find the opinion of this ingenious author, upon the multiplication of theſe fanatical ſchiſmatics, exactly ſimilar to the impreſſions I had previouſly entertained, from a conſideration of their conduct; I have therefore taken the liberty of tranſcribing it at full length.

" The incalculably rapid increaſe of theſe lo-
" cuſts, and the obloquy their frantic demeanor,
" ignorance, and vulgarity, entail upon true reli-
" gion, and the reſpectable part of the clergy,
" render the interference of the legiſlature indiſ-
" penſably neceſſary. If any of the magiſtrates
" of the realm ſhould honour this work with a
" peruſal, they will acknowledge that my remarks
" are juſt. Mr. Mainwaring, to his credit, has
" exerted himſelf, as far as the power veſted in him
" by law will permit, to ſuppreſs this unſufferable
" nuiſance; but, as the law ſtands at preſent, the
" hands of magiſtrates are tied, and they ſcarcely
" dare refuſe a licence to the moſt contemptible
" blockhead, who believes, or wiſhes to make
" others believe, he has received a call. I am
" credibly informed, and I honour the gentleman
" for his conduct on the occaſion, that the magiſ-
" trate whom I above named experienced ſome
" difficulty in rejecting the application of a mean
" deſpicable wretch, who, upon being queſtioned
" what profeſſion he followed, proved to be a *bellows-*

blower

" *blower to a forge*, and was ſo ſhockingly illiterate, " that he could not even tell the letters of the " alphabet. The ſubjoined liſt, of ſome of the " recently-ordained retailers of the Goſpel, was " communicated to me, by a worthy and religious " friend, and will ſerve to illuſtrate the propriety " of the preceding remarks:

Mr. Norton,	Dealer in Old Clothes,
Mr. Wilſon,	Grinder,
Mr. Timothy Hinds,	Sheeps-Head Seller,
Mr. Saunders,	Coach-Painter,
Mr. Colſton,	Preſſman,
Mr. O———,	Mangle-Maker,
Mr. Downes,	Glazier,
Mr. Hickup,	Footman to J. G. Eſq.
Mr. Staunton,	Tooth-Drawer, Peruke-Maker, and Phlebotomiſt,
Mr. Parry,	Breeches-Maker, &c. &c.

" Almoſt, *ad infinitum*; not leſs than 397 having " taken out Preaching-Licences, at the New " Seſſions-Houſe, Clerkenwell, in the courſe of " the years 1796-7."

The author goes on to obſerve, " That, having " once touched upon this ſubject, it would be " an act of injuſtice to diſmiſs it, without obſerving, " as it accounts, in a great degree, for the vaſt " number of upſtart teachers and doctrines for " which this country is pre-eminently diſtinguiſh- " ed, that, there is, in this metropolis, a *ci-devant* " Coal-heaver, notorious for no qualification upon " earth, but conſummate impudence and incor- " rigible ignorance, whom, I am given to under- " ſtand, is in the receipt of nearly £1000 *per* " *annum*. He is proprietor and *fac totum* of two

" chapels,

" chapels, and has lately purchaſed the elegant " manſion of the late Dr. M———h, with grounds " and appurtenances; in addition to which, he " keeps his carriage."

Two months after I had determined upon ſketching out an account of the ſcandals occaſioned to religion, by illiterate enthuſiaſts; and, after I had proceeded thus far in the execution of my deſign, I learned, with pleaſure, that this ſubject of complaint had been noticed in the Houſe of Commons: on Monday, Februry 3, M. Angelo Taylor gave notice of an intended motion; and in which, he aſked relief in the caſe of licenſing preachers; urging, that, within a very ſhort time, he had been applied to, and obliged to grant a licence to a boy of ſeventeen years of age, as a *Preacher of the Goſpel!*

I may now add, ſince writing the laſt remark, the additional ſatisfaction of finding my obſervations, upon the wretched ignorance of theſe itinerant preachers, fully confirmed by the Report from the Clergy of the Dioceſe of Lincoln, convened, the firſt time in Auguſt laſt, for the purpoſe of conſidering the State of Religion; Printed for Rivington, St. Paul's Church-yard, and Hatchard, Piccadilly.

In this valuable production, one of the leading cauſes of the dangers ariſing to the church and government of this kingdom, and the alarming increaſe of profaneneſs and irreligion, is juſtly imputed to thoſe Methodiſts, ſuch as I have deſcribed in London, " who attend and encourage " a wandering tribe of fanatical teachers, moſtly " taken from the loweſt and moſt illiterate claſſes " of ſociety; among whom are to be found, ra- " ving enthuſiaſts, pretending to divine impulſes, " of various and extraordinary kinds, practiſing

" exorciſms, and many other ſorts of impoſtures " and deluſions, and obtaining, thereby, an un- " limited ſway over the minds of the ignorant " multitude."

This third and loweſt claſs of perſons, to whom the name of Methodiſts is uſually given, it is alſo obſerved, are neither qualified by education for the office of teachers, nor bound by the declaration of any fixed principles, nor reſtrained by any ſenſe of decency or ſhame; and ſo various are their abſurdities, that they ſeem to have no point of union, except a determination to calumniate the eſtabliſhed Clergy, which deſign they execute with unrelenting violence and malice, at all times, and in all places. " Some " of them, it is repeated, practiſe exorciſms, and " capricious forms, and modes of it, utterly in- " conſiſtent, not only with religious gravity but " with morality and decency: they have alſo " frequently denounced the reprobation not only " of particular perſons and families but of whole " villages, and publicly execrated the churches, " as being nothing but a heap of ſtones."

This report, evidently dictated by a ſpirit of moderation and veracity, farther imputes " the " propagation of theſe miſrepreſentations and im- " impoſtures to the private aſſemblies, known by " the name of Claſſed Meetings;" but it does not dwell upon the unprecedented influence of the leaders of theſe *bands*, as they are called. The latter are, to all intents and purpoſes, Father-Confeſſors, in their way; and though generally leſs informed than the preachers, to which office they occaſionally aſcend, yet theſe men are profeſſionally called upon, to hear the ſecrets of families, and to determine upon, and direct ſuch intricate movements of the mind as would juſtly require

the

the ſkill of an acute philoſopher, or a judicious divine; but, being filled by illiterate zealots, their manner of queſtioning young perſons, relative to their ſenſations ariſing from attachments, &c. &c. has not ſeldom been the ſubject of obſervation and cenſure.

More information reſpecting the extraordinary miſſions of Lay Methodiſt-preachers, in the country, may be copiouſly collected from the Evangelical and other Magazines, ſtill in circulation, under the head of Religious, or Miſſionary Intelligence. Perhaps theſe are neither of the loweſt nor the moſt miſchievous deſcription; however, all muſt tend to ſhew, that, "the intereſting ſtatement of facts" contained in the Report of the Dioceſe of Lincoln is "really applicable to a great part of "the kingdom," and that the complaint ſeriouſly calls for the attention of the Legiſlature, by the inlet which it gives to Socinianiſm, Deiſm, and even Atheiſm. And, farther, that, "the ſame means "might, with equal efficacy, be employed to ſap "and overturn the ſtate, as well as the church; "of which ſome flagrant inſtances have not been "wanting."

If the ſame ſcrutiny, thus happily begun in the Dioceſe of Lincoln, ſhould be applied in London, we ſhall then find the ſame deſigns of theſe low and bigotted Sectariſts branched out into a thouſand ſhapes. One of their methods, not generally known, and in which ſome of the moſt illiterate bear a principal part, is, in qualifying themſelves for a more public miniſtry, by viſiting the ſick-poor at their own houſes; being employed, by various ſocieties, rather with a view of making proſelytes than to alleviate, as they profeſs, the temporal wants of the indigent and ſick: for, if the perſons viſited hear their exhortations with patience,

half-

half-a-crown is the utmoſt reward of their attention; and the viſits and the donation may be repeated twice or thrice. But if, on the contrary, no diſpoſition is ſhewn to adopt the *particular mode of faith*, profeſſed by theſe humble Miſſionaries, (I ſpeak from certain knowledge) inſtances have not been wanting, when they have departed without leaving any evidences of their *charity!*

Now, while, by the operation of theſe proſelyting agents, falſe religion is palmed upon the unwary for the true; and, while the mere endeavour to increaſe a party borrows the name of piety, it is evident, that a conſtant ſource of ſcandal, againſt the eſtabliſhed church, is kept open, and daily adding to thoſe uncharitable diviſions, of which Infidels are ever ready to avail themſelves, for depreciating religion in general.

It is much to be lamented, that ſo many opportunities preſent themſelves to theſe fanatics; it is, perhaps, one of the incurable evils attendant upon a numerous population. However, that much might be done to counteract them, even in the metropolis, is clear, from what has been done already. The memory of the Rev. Mr. Richards, Curate of St. Sepulchre's in this city, is ſtill freſh in the minds of his pariſhioners: his diligence, during thirty years reſidence, in viſiting, relieving, and admoniſhing, the lower orders of people, both within and beyond the bounds of his pariſh, has made an impreſſion on the minds of all that knew him which will never be effaced. Unbleſſed with any brilliancy of parts, or a captivating addreſs, his ſteady and indefatigable perſeverance, in the line of his duty, alone enſured him that fame, which he never ſought after.

Though truly humble in his deportment, ſo far from expoſing him to inſult, his conduct and ap-

 pearance

pearance would frequently call forth the warmeſt wiſhes for his welfare, as he paſſed through the ſtreets. He was, indeed, gentle and eaſy to be intreated, and was frequently known to riſe from his table, to attend any ſudden call for his ſervices. He died ſo truly lamented, that, as many perſons can teſtify, there were very few dry eyes at the period of his interment in his own pariſh-church.

But, with very little income beſides his curacy, it is not to be ſuppoſed the many that partook of his bounty owed their obligations to him alone. As I am informed, ſeveral well-diſpoſed perſons, convinced of his integrity, depoſited their alms with him, to be diſtributed at his diſcretion: an office which he had the faculty of executing without letting the receivers feel their inferiority, though it was never unaccompanied by ſome ſuitable admonition. A Reverend Gentleman, in giving evidence upon the trial of Jane Gibbs, at the Old Bailey Seſſions, for September, 1799, mentioned his own precaution of wearing an *unpowdered wig, becauſe Clergymen could not paſs along the ſtreets without being inſulted.* A moſt ſurpriſing aſſertion! for though the late truly-pious Curate of St. Sepulchre's uſed to be remarkable for a plainneſs of dreſs, almoſt bordering upon meanneſs, and wore a white buſhy wig, the populace were ſo far from inſulting him, that even the butchers in Fleet-market, and the very loweſt and profligate characters in the pariſh, have borne his admonitions with temper and reſpect; and this, in the moments of exceſs. Severe examples, no doubt, would have been made of any perſon attempting to have treſpaſſed againſt this truly good man, beyond the bounds of decency or good manners; an inſtance of which, was never known to have occurred.

But

But independently of the influence of perſonal virtue, the populace of this city has never degenerated ſo low, as to juſtify the unheard-of precaution of Dr. Ford, which, if well founded, would have given ſuch of our Gallic neighbours, as have thrown off the Chriſtian religion, an idea, that we were in a very hopeful way. The contrary, I believe, thouſands as well as myſelf are ready to teſtify.

It ſhould have been mentioned, that Mr. Richards, having no children, though married, took one of the girls out of a large family belonging to one of his pariſhioners; not to bring her up as a menial ſervant, as might have been expected, but whom he cauſed to be educated as one of his own; and, after his deceaſe, ſhe was the companion of his pious relict, his conſtant imitator in acts of piety and condeſcenſion.

But beſides the public and private duties of his own pariſh, Mr. Richards, for a conſiderable time, was engaged in the painful and diſcouraging taſk of officiating at Clerkenwell-Bridewell. Here, his admonitions in the pulpit were always ſeconded by acts of kindneſs to ſuch priſoners as ſhewed any ſigns of contrition and amendment; a ſtamp of ſincerity and condeſcenſion on his part, which was very ſeldom loſt upon the objects with whom he was engaged.

The late Rev. Mr. Richard Southgate, of St. Giles's in the Fields, was another of theſe valuable characters. He was, ſays one of his biographers, "in the daily habit of viſiting the retreats of ſick-"neſs and miſery, and the moſt abandoned and "profligate in the holes and corners of that pariſh." And yet, like Mr. Richards's pariſhioners, they treated him with that good manners which they paid no one elſe. It ſhould be obſerved, that

the pooreſt of the Iriſh, who form a principal part of Mr. Southgate's late pariſh, though Catholics, treat a regular Clergyman with conſiderable reſpect.

Before ſuch conduct as this, how wretched a figure muſt the Infidel maxim make, "That every "prieſt is either a knave or a fool." A conduct which muſt for ever ſilence the objections both of Infidels and fanatics, by demonſtrating, in the ſtrongeſt manner, that a paſtor of an exemplary life, is "*an incalculable bleſſing*." Perhaps, with others, who have borne the appellation of evangelical preachers, the late Rev. Mr. Berridge was a paſtor, juſtly eſteemed a bleſſing to his people.

The real friend and companion of his pariſhioners in the country, Mr. Berridge's charity and officious attention was the moſt impreſſive recommendation of the doctrine which he delivered from the pulpit. In fact, one would think the bare recollection of the natural and acquired abilities of ſuch miniſters as Meſſrs. Berridge, Percy, Peckwell, &c. would force a bluſh for the compariſon between them and Lady Ann's preachers; but, for the credit of the cauſe, this Lady would be thought to ſupport, it is hoped that, in future, ſome education will be a *firſt* and not a SECONDARY conſideration for theſe young men, at preſent decorated as ſcholars, while, inſtead of being apt to teach; their friends pity, and their enemies deride them: ſo that the injunction once delivered to ſome others, *viz.* "to tarry at Jeruſalem till their beards were grown," ſeems particularly applicable to their ſtate and condition.

Innovations, in matters of faith, always weaken the obligations of religion, and ſometimes ſcandalize its profeſſors; of courſe, the opinions of Baron Sweden-

Swedenborg, approaching nearer than any others to modern Infidelity, may be ſuppoſed to have adminiſtered in proportion to the objections of Deiſts and Atheiſts. What muſt theſe think of a ſect, who, under the appellation of Chriſtians, explain away the doctrine of the atonement, the reſurrection, and the day of judgment? Let them be told, that, from the canon of the New Teſtament, this new ſect have excluded all the Epiſtles, which they claſs as *private letters!* That with them the day of judgment is more a *figure* than a *fact:* that it commenced about 1758, in the printing and publication of the judgment of Emmanuel Swedenborg, to condemn, collectively, all the doctrines of the *Old*, or Trinitarian, church.

Theſe and ſeveral other opinions, held by the diſciples of the New church, would certainly meet much of the approbation of Infidels, as ſome of the moſt eligible means of bringing Chriſtianity in general into diſrepute.

The principal article of this ſelf-called *New* church, it ſhould be obſerved, is juſt as *Old* as Muggleton and Reeves; who, after the protectorſhip of Oliver, were the firſt who publiſhed, that the whole godhead is circumſcribed in the perſon of Jeſus Chriſt, ſtill retaining the human form in heaven; the *belief of which*, and not *repentance*, both Muggletonians and Swedenborgians enforce upon their followers, as the *firſt* and moſt eſſential condition of goſpel acceptance.

Notwithſtanding all the recommendation of a pompous worſhip among the new ſect of Swedenborgians, the fantaſtical diſpoſal of the two officiating miniſters in one chapel, and the dreſs of the paſtor in another, imitating a *Chef de Famille*, among the French theophilanthropiſts, a new liturgy, and the ſubſtitution of the name of the

temple

temple for that of church, ſo ſlow is their progreſs in making proſelytes, that to prepare for a decent retreat, ſome of their leaders have publiſhed an opinion, that it never was the deſign of the illuminated Baron, to found any new mode of public worſhip upon his doctrines.

But notwithſtanding this hint, and a previous failure at the Weſt end of the town, another temple has been opened in York-ſtreet, St. James's, namely, the late Roman Catholic chapel; into which, if ſome perſons ſhould enter, while the miniſter (according to a former cuſtom in the temple, near Hatton-Garden) is reading with his back towards the congregation, the place may ſtill be taken for what it has been, and tend to confirm the vulgar opinion of a reſemblance between this *New* church, and the *Old* church of Rome.

Having failed of ſucceſs in the Eaſtern part of the metropolis, which abounds with religious perſuaſions of all denominations, mechanics, and others, with leſs learning and leiſure to make inquiries, than the inhabitants of the Court end of the town, it requires no gift of prophecy to predict the fate of the New church in York-ſtreet, St James's. As for the apology, that it never was the will of the Baron to eſtabliſh a new form of worſhip, after a ſeries of unſucceſsful attempts for twelve years paſt, it is nothing more than a clumſy attempt to make a virtue of neceſſity. The real cauſe of this preparation, for a decent exit, is in the doctrines themſelves, which have too much of the metaphyſics for the head, and too little energy for the heart; and of courſe are not adapted to obtain any laſting intereſt with the generality of men, after their novelty has ſubſided. Nor can they produce that change upon the profligate, which ſucceeds to ſtronger motives, congenial with the natural ideas which uncontaminated

nated judgments entertain of the results of virtue and vice: a change, which notwithstanding always follows a cordial belief of the doctrines generally taught by the *Old Church* of England; but which the *New* and *enlightened Church*, is led to consider as "a tissue of shocking absurdities."

As the origin of Swedenborgianism in this country differs from that of any other religion that I know of, a little farther digression may be excused. In most cases, new sects have been collected by the superior address or elocution of the original founders. Thus, in the instance of Methodism, the powerful appeals made to the minds of numbers of people, grounded upon the doctrines of the Church of England, did really excite and persuade great bodies of them to adopt its principles, feeling their mental interest in so doing. Not so, the founders of Swedenborgianism, a sect, which literally originated in a printer's job! being hatched in the parish of Clerkenwell, near the spot where the Baron had his obscure lodging, *viz.* at a hair-dresser's, in Bath-street, Cold-Bath-Fields, while he resided in this country. Its next appearance was in an alley. in Little Eastcheap, partly in the modern and fashionable form of a debating society: but, instead of preachers collecting the people, these people were so hard run to collect preachers, that for a considerable time the office was generally confined to the printer alluded to, and one of his relatives. After some of the Baron's works were translated, and published in this city, the idea of quickening a heavy sale might have had its weight in the attempts to make them the basis of a new mode of worship. The celebrity of the Baron was, in the next place, diffused by the publication of the Magazine of Heaven and Hell; and a Romance, calculated to introduce

troduce his, or rather the principles of his editor's, among the ladies; ſo that with the ſubſequent labours of ſome ingenious men, and the aſſiſtance of a few of the wealthy, in opening Temples at Mancheſter, Birmingham, &c. they have hitherto contrived to keep the name of the ſect alive, notwithſtanding ſome ſteps have been taken for withdrawing altogether from any farther exhibition in public. Yet, if appearances are to be truſted, the moſt heterodox opinions that ever bore the name of Chriſtianity, will not trouble the orthodox much longer.

This pageant, this pantomime of religion, having no fund of ſupport, but a ſlender annuity in the lives of a few wealthy individuals, can never deſcend to poſterity, nor exiſt but as an additional article in the catalogue of ſome Alexander Roſs's Hiſtory of All Religions. From appearances, one would ſuppoſe this ſect already verging towards bankruptcy, as it is not long ſince a ſubſcription was opened to reprint the works of the Baron, in which the ſmall ſum of one penny a week was not unacceptable.

How are the mighty fallen!

The late diſpoſition for a more extenſive ſufferance of the Roman Catholic religion, and eſpecially the relief of the unfortunate Emigrant Clergy, has not only been the ſubject of bitter invective in the clubs, but out of them, ſome zealots, bearing the Chriſtian name, have gone ſo far as to publiſh heavy cenſures upon the late Rev. W. Romaine, merely for collecting alms for the Emigrants. People of this caſt, and thoſe profeſſing Infidelity, wiſhed to ſee all the ancient animoſities between Proteſtant and Papiſt, revived in the preſent war. To inflame the Proteſtants againſt a government that entered into an alliance with Popiſh powers; and, laſtly, with the Pope himſelf, was a favourite undertaking;

dertaking; but here, excluſively of political motives, theſe calumniators, were not aware, that their own partizans in irreligion, the French Robeſperians, by proclaiming death an eternal ſleep, and other enormities, had left their opponents no medium to chooſe between Atheiſm, and the old eſtabiſhed religion of the country. The new philoſophy then, by its unqualified oppoſition to the Catholic religion, was the indirect cauſe of all the protection, the latter has ſince met with from the enemies of the republic.

Glad, indeed, would have been the partizans of Atheiſm, could they have perſuaded Diſſenters, and others, that the Proteſtant religion was really in danger. But, unhappily for them, while they were ſpreading alarms of the growth of Popery, ſome of its chapels in the metropolis, were actually ſhut up, for want of their uſual ſupport from abroad. And thus, from the charity of the Engliſh Clergy towards the Emigrants, the enemies of both were reduced to the neceſſity of branding an exemplary virtue with the character of a vice!

In concluding this narrative, I have the conſcious ſatisfaction, that I have removed none of the ancient landmarks between things ſacred and profane; that I have adminiſtered to no new ſect or diviſion; and that my deſign, however weakly executed, has not been to deſtroy, but to build up; to ſtrengthen the weak, and confirm the feeble. But did ſectarians, who build ſpeculative opinions, even upon the ancient foundations, previouſly reflect, they could have little hope of benefiting mankind. If they fail in their attempts, they only reap ſhame and remorſe; and, if they ſucceed, it is probable, that they lay the foundation of new feuds and diſſentions; and, like the madman mentioned in the Proverbs, "ſcatter firebrands, arrows, and death."

Having now gone through a detail of all the late branches of modern Infidelity, without the leaſt known deviation from matter of fact; and having ſhewn that the ſocieties owed their diſſolution principally to the reaction of their own maxims and opinions, I ſhall now leave the application of theſe facts to the country at large.

But, as there are numbers, who ſtill indulge the ruinous ſentiments of Deiſm and Atheiſm, and only wait for an opportunity of rallying their ſcattered forces, I ſhall now offer a few more reflexions upon the operation of thoſe ſentiments; not merely as they have hitherto been argued from, in books; but as they have occurred in real life, ſince the habit of diſbelieving the Chriſtian religion has been faſhionable. In theſe reflections I flatter myſelf that I ſhall demonſtrate the blindneſs of Infidels, in perſiſting to ſhut their eyes againſt the cleareſt convictions of truth and reaſon.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS.

On the Influence of Infidel Opinions upon Society; answering the various Objections of Modern Deists and Atheists against the Doctrines of Christianity.

Non leve momentum apud nos habet consensus omnium, aut timentium inferos, aut colentium.

SENECA.

THERE is, undoubtedly, a secret cause, why the most convincing arguments, hitherto urged against *modern* Deism and Atheism, have failed of effect, *viz.* a general persuasion among the *illuminated*, the *new* pretenders to *philosophy*, "that, under "some system of government more favourable "than the present, their doctrines will certainly "display their superiority, in exterminating these "vices and *individual calamities*, which, during the "present order of things, must remain as they are."

Now, without waiting for this imaginary period, the best mode of investigating the solidity of this assertion, will be to examine what progress has been made in this supposed scale of perfection.

As Infidels have a natural antipathy to miracles, they will the more readily admit, that every ſpecies of reformation has its gradations; the progreſs, therefore, that you have already made upon a part of the community, is the beſt criterion to enable us to judge of your probable ſucceſs upon the whole.

To come to matter of fact: During the five years in which the diſſemination of your opinions has been comparatively free, Have any of you been able to convince the whole circle of your acquaintance, a whole houſe, or a whole family, of the falſity or irrationality of the Chriſtian doctrines?

If to theſe interrogations you are compelled to anſwer, No; Where then is the probability of your ſucceeding upon a larger ſcale?

The Roman ſatyriſt, Juvenal, has obſerved, that a ſingle houſe will ſhew whatever is done or ſuffered in the world; it then follows that, if the little Theatre, upon which you have acted, had been enlarged, it would only have expoſed you ſo much the more, to the hiſſes and inſults of a diſappointed audience. In fact, the recent ſhutting up of the great Theophilanthropic Theatre in Paris, though ſupported by all the ſtrength of the Republican government, is a convincing proof, that no inferior attempt will ever ſucceed, eſpecially in a country, which, in oppoſition to the comparative levity of the French, has borne the proud diſtinction of "A "nation of philoſophers."

Deſtitute of every kind of public worſhip, beyond a mere fête or ſhew, I would aſk you, what impreſſion this is likely to make upon ſullen and untoward diſpoſitions? Levelling all diſtinctions between ſacred and profane, you, alas! have no hiſtory either to ſeize the imagination, or intereſt the paſſions. But, without this, be your public inſtitutions

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or your Religious Fêtes ever ſo ſplendid, ſtill, as Pliny ſaid of the Circean games ; *Nihil novum, nihil varium, nihil quod non ſemel ſpectaſſe ſufficiat,* muſt ever apply to ſuch exhibitions. Not ſo, either the doctrines or dogmas of the Chriſtian Religion, they are ſuited to every neceſſity, and adapted to every diſpoſition. Even the diverſity and variety of ſenſes, attached to the different parts of the ſacred Scriptures, are the ground of unanimity upon general principles ; they fix the attention, they excite the diſcurſive faculties in the mind, or they elevate or ſuſtain it under adverſity ; while the cold and undiverſified ſymmetry, which your ſyſtem of *reaſon* would ſuggeſt, grows wearisome by its ſameneſs, and diſguſting from its uniformity. Indeed, while you muſt acknowledge, that the "paſſions are the elements of life," your introduction of a ſyſtem, which tends to quench, or deſtroy them, is one of the moſt glaring of inconſiſtencies.

We, you ſay, only wiſh to cultivate and improve the faculty of reaſon ; this leads to the charge of another abſurdity and inconſiſtency in your conduct as philoſophers, which I ſhall immediately conſider. Is it poſſible that the cultivation of reaſon ſhould be your principal object, while you are actually deſtroying or undermining the ſtrongeſt incitements to the exerciſe of the reaſoning powers? I am aware, that in conſequence of your prejudices, you will not readily comprehend this charge ; but I will explain myſelf. The great truths of Religion, which fix and recall the wandering ſenſes and affections of men, you endeavour to reſolve into vain fears and uſeleſs chimeras. Thoſe ſentiments, which powerfully ſtimulate the mind to a calculation of the probable effects of moral good or evil, you deride as folly and enthuſiaſm! You muſt know that a volatility and inconſtancy of mind is common to youth ;

and that it is indiſpenſably neceſſary to fix this volatility, before the faculty of laying down premiſes, and reaſoning from concluſions, can be introduced. You ſhould know alſo, that the attachment of pains and penalties to the non-performance of theſe conditions is neceſſary to excite men to action: but inſtead of the ſtrong motives of everlaſting happineſs and miſery, as they are expreſſed in the Scriptures, what are the inducements of your code? The *Reaſon and Fitneſs of Things!* the perſuaſion that virtue is its own reward; that human actions are neceſſary; that man is accountable to man only for any of his actions! As theſe are charges which you can neither palliate nor deny, will you have the effrontery to aſſert, that the laxity and indifference attending theſe notions have not an indirect tendency to annihilate the neceſſity of reaſon or calculation? Men who cannot be intereſted in your creeds, beyond giving them a bare aſſent, can never ſuppoſe themſelves under the neceſſity, either to compare or judge of the probabilities, or improbabilities of any other ſyſtem; and principally becauſe, beyond the opinion of the world, they have no ſtake to hazard.

On the other hand, the Chriſtian, however mean his natural abilities may be; however weak and unpractiſed his reaſoning faculties, if once rouſed from his vices, or ſupineneſs, by the awakening voice of Religion, it is more than a hundred to one, if his reaſoning powers are not much improved by the change. It then becomes his irreſiſtible intereſt to reaſon upon the conſequences of emerging from, or apoſtatizing into, the ſtate from which he had been awakened. In fact, he not only becomes a Naturaliſt, but he may exalt his faculties ſtill higher, by contemplating the nature and attributes of Deity, or thoſe intelligences ſuperior to man: a ſphere to which

which the poor alienated Infidel has no excitement. The Chriſtian, in the former ſtate, like the prodigal ſon reſtored to the houſe of his father, truly enjoys an intellectual feaſt; while the Infidel, a fugitive, and an outcaſt, and eſpecially, if he be a ſenſualiſt, may be ſaid to *feed upon the huſks with the ſwine.* Deluded men! and is this the ſtate of degradation for which you plead? Reaſon, you aſſert, is the great object for which you contend; and yet, rejecting the doctrine which can beſt allay and tranquillize the impetuous paſſions, and forſaking that calm region where its voice can only be heard, you deſtroy the means by which you ſhould arrive at the end propoſed! That many of you are not reaſoners, at leaſt from your own principles, cannot be denied. But what was the primeval cauſe of this exertion? Moſt of your leaders, originally profeſſing the Chriſtian Religion, are indebted to its faith and doctrines, for the *primum mobile*, which gave the firſt impulſe to their rational faculties; firſt excited and ſharpened the talent of inveſtigation: nor would they have been able to wound Religion, if they had not firſt ſtolen her arrows.

Perhaps, the thunders of that religion, you now deride, were the means of arreſting ſome of you in a courſe of ſenſuality, which would ultimately have ſmothered every latent ſpark of ratiocination then dormant in your minds; and does it thus become *you* to depreciate the only medium, by which you have riſen to your recent diſtinction? Still, this abſurdity, peculiar to modern Infidelity, does not reſt here; for degenerating into downright ingratitude, like an offspring perfectly unnatural, you chiefly ſuſtain your character by deſcanting upon the vices or frailties of the parent ſtock; beyond the ſphere of declamation, you cannot exiſt. The *reformation* you pretend to advocate, would be your *ruin.*

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Like the animalculæ, bred upon the filth of creation, you delight in clinging to the weak ſide of humanity. You have no ſuſtenance which you do not derive from its wounds. No foundation which is not built upon the ruin of others. Your conſequence is enhanced by their degradation; and your unanimity derives all its force from the diviſions, you are the firſt to create or extend. Theſe charges, harſh as they may appear, I am not diſpoſed to fix in the malignity of your nature, but rather, in an over-weening vanity and affectation of knowledge. But as this mania has almoſt excluſively taken poſſeſſion of young minds, it may behove you to reflect upon the influence theſe ſceptical opinions may have in future upon your own happineſs, as fathers, huſbands, and other relatives. Ceaſe, then, to boaſt of perplexing a few weak minds by a hackneyed ſtring of common place arguments, or drawing a multitude, by the torrent of your declamation: the majority of your objections to the Chriſtian doctrines, as it will preſently appear, are grounded upon prejudice, and the want of a proper diſcrimination.

Firſt, I obſerve, that what are called the atrocious cruelities of the Bible Hiſtory, are in the mouth of every objector who has read Paine's Age of Reaſon, without peruſing the Anſwer of the Biſhop of Llandaff. But even granting the full force of the Infidel's objections, without inſiſting upon the purity of circumſtances in God's government of the natural world, ſo judiciouſly urged by the learned Biſhop, I would fain know, what influence theſe hiſtories of cruelty have upon the generality of Chriſtians? The acts complained of, were moſtly perpetrated by Princes; from whence there is little danger of their examples upon the people; upon the ſcore of inability: and beſides, theſe acts are

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placed at ſuch a diſtant period, and are neceſſarily involved in ſuch a peculiarity of circumſtances, as to produce very little, if any effect, upon the manners of civil ſociety.

If the Infidel will ſtill urge, that this inefficacy of example is equally applicable to the acts of piety and benevolence recorded in the Scriptures, I anſwer, that upon the latter, the minds of men are fond of dwelling with complacency and delight, and will frequently revolve them in their recollection; while deeds of comparative atrocity are paſſed over with indifference, and ſeldom, or ever made the ſubject of meditation, nor even recurred to, without neceſſity; or, in the courſe of their reading or worſhip. To prove the charge brought by Infidels, it is incumbent upon them to ſhew that thoſe denominations of Chriſtians, who have drank the deepeſt of Scripture knowledge, have perpetrated the greateſt proportion of barbarities. Unhappily for Deiſts and Atheiſts, the contrary has been the fact, as the Papiſts, to whom the reading of the Scriptures has been the moſt part prohibited, have been almoſt excluſively the perpetrators of the enormities, uncandidly charged upon Chriſtians in general.

The natural cruelty of the Mahometans, is another argument in favour of the humanity of the Chriſtian ſyſtem; notwithſtanding the opinion of Infidels, that the former approach the neareſt of the two, to the ſtandard of reaſon.

But, religious perſecution, though not peculiar to the Chriſtian Religion, attaches to bigots of every deſcription; conſequently it is an imputation, from which *unbelievers* are by no means free. Helvetius, one of the moſt eminent of the modern materialiſts, obſerves, "there are few men who would "not employ violence to engage the world to adopt

" their ſentiments, if they had it in their power." A ſtronger truiſm than this could not have been pronounced, had Helvetius been an eye-witneſs to all the petty malignities made uſe of by his ſucceſſors to the preſent day. Very little experience, among this kind of people, is quite ſufficient to ſhew, that a perſecuting ſpirit is not peculiar to the Chriſtian communities.

Modern Infidels frequently calumniate our religion, in oppoſing the forbearance of Pagans to what they call, the perſecuting ſpirit of the Chriſtians; a vice from which they ſay, the former were quite exempt. But to undeceive ſuch perſons, I ſhall preſent them with the following inſtances of the contrary of their aſſertions, ſelected by a recent writer in favour of Chriſtianity.

Aſpaſia, having been accuſed of impiety, owed her father's life to the interceſſion of Pericles, and the tears he ſhed while pleading her cauſe.

Anaxagoras, of Claſomenæ, was in danger of loſing his head, for aſſerting that the ſun was a huge maſs of hot iron.

Diagoras, of Melos, had a talent ſet upon his head, for ridiculing the religious myſteries.

Protagoras, having queſtioned the exiſtence of the gods, only eſcaped death by flight.

And, laſtly, Socrates was compelled to drink poiſon at Athens, by an expreſs law of that city, againſt any perſon who ſhould be the introducer of a new god.

But leaving the ancients to inquire, whether modern Infidels would not be as violent perſecutors as any others whom they accuſe, and even greater than Chriſtians have been; this, I preſume, may be determined by a few plain queſtions, and their anſwers. Firſt, ſince it is evident that the hopes and comforts of Infidels are bound up in the

pleaſures

pleaſures and enjoyments of the preſent life; is it not undeniable, that any perſons, propagating a ſyſtem which tends to diſturb their purſuits, interrupt their enjoyments, or leſſen their conſequence, muſt render themſelves odious?

Is it in the power of the laws to ſuppreſs or controul the private hatred, or animoſity, of Infidels againſt their opponents?

Is it not alſo probable, that calumny and contempt will be made uſe of to ruin the credit of ſuch perſons, who may innocently ſuppoſe the preſent life not to be the *ultimatum* of all their hopes and happineſs?

But while Chriſtians might thus expoſe themſelves to the perſecutions of Infidels, the probability that the latter would not be perſecuted in return; or that their retaliation would be conſiderably leſs in proportion, than that of the former, is evident from various conſiderations. For inſtance;

The Chriſtian, expecting a hearing before another tribunal, may bear with many offences and repeated wrongs; and, therefore, will be leſs liable than the Infidel to retaliate an injury upon his neighbour, or enemy.

He may alſo be quickened in this ſpirit of forbearance, by the conſideration, that he obeys one of the poſitive commands of the Goſpel; and that, by the patient endurance of other men's faults, he ſhall the better enſure the forgiveneſs of his own.

And, upon the ſame belief, he may even go farther, by returning good for evil.

Now, as Infidelity acknowledges neither motives nor objects of this kind, its objections to Chriſtianity, upon the ground of cruelty, or perſecution, are proved to have no real foundation in fact.

We have alſo been told, that the wiſdom of a nation may be ſeen in its proverbs. To the advantage of Chriſtianity, then, we may remark, that the Mahometans have an adage, expreſſing that, "He who forgives an injury, does well; but he "that revenges it, does better." A maxim this, which, however it may aſſimilate with Infidelity, militates againſt both the letter, and the ſpirit of the Chriſtian religion.

Having done with the charge of perſecution, I muſt advert to the Infidel's opinion of the *Reaſon and fitneſs of things*, which they recommend as a ſtandard to try the abſurdity of Chriſtian doctrines; and which, if we could give them credit, theſe gentlemen have the excluſive privilege of exhibiting to advantage. If ſo, how is it that their demonſtrations have been repeated, years after years, without effect; and that people in general ſtill reject their ſolutions of the phenomena around them? How is it that your notion of the origination of all things from a confuſed maſs of atoms;—that there is no other God than the univerſe;—that all the men and animals, which deſtroy each other, are only parts and modifications of the ſupreme Being;—that matter firſt ſet itſelf in motion;—that man's ſuperiority to the brute reſults entirely from his organization;—that he is like a piece of mechaniſm, or a plant, and that when he dies, all dies with him:—I ſay, what is the reaſon that theſe opinions of yours, gain no more evidence than they have done, though they have wanted none of the advantages of rhetoric or elocution to recomend them to the world? How is it that theſe leaves, from your tree of knowledge, ſo flattering to human vanity, meet with no more admirers? How is it that the great maſs of people do not join iſſue with you in the

the ſupport of thoſe opinions, which are to free them from the fetters of their education, and the preſſure of ſuperſtition and tyranny? But above all, How is it that your doctrines cannot deliver men from their perſonal vices and defects, and the predominance of evil habits and paſſions? You muſt acknowledge that, after all your perſeverance and indefatigable endeavours to enlighten them, they do not comprehend the magnitude and importance of your ſchemes! otherwiſe, they could not reject them! What then becomes of your *Reaſon and Fitneſs of things?* This queſtion muſt reſolve itſelf into one of theſe ſolutions; "Either you "are *not fit* to teach;—or it is *not fit* that mankind "ſhould be ſo inſtructed."

The ſuperior efficacy of the Chriſtian doctrine upon the minds, even of ſuch men as are, or have been, immerſed in vice and folly, cannot be diſputed, but by thoſe who are enveloped in prejudices, which I have found as prevalent among Infidels as any deſcription of Chriſtians whatever.

One of the principal obſtacles to your inſtruction, I find to be, that flattering notion of Mr. Paine, "that every man's mind is his own church."

Some of you are ready to deify Mr. Paine for this diſcovery;—but let me tell you, he was not the firſt that broached this deleterious noſtrum; it was in the mouths and writings of almoſt all the ſectariſts that diſtracted this kingdom, between the reigns of Charles the Firſt and Second. It is a principle, virtually acknowledged by the Quakers, and was very pointedly urged and inſiſted upon, by a perſon in the laſt century, known by the appellation of Cobler How; in a pamphlet entitled, "The Sufficiency of the Spirit's Teaching;" and in plain ſenſe, means very little more, than that

every

every man loves to be led by his own whims and fancies, as ſoon as ever he becomes a Diſſenter from the eſtabliſhed order of the church. This explanation, I think, is well warranted by the conduct of thoſe who have, from time to time, adopted the principle of *ſelf-ſufficiency*.

In fact, ſo far from anſwering the end propoſed, either by Infidels or Sectariſts, I have generally obſerved, that when this notion is reduced to practice, inſtead of being ſufficient for the teaching of all, it has been the principal reaſon why none have been ſufficiently taught! In caſes of common life, men naturally aſk the advice of others, but here, in a concern of the laſt importance, every man's knowledge is ſuppoſed ſufficient for himſelf.

In no ſingle point whatever has the ignorance of Atheiſts and Deiſts appeared ſo glaring, as when they affect a capacity for Bible criticiſm. Mr. Paine's obſervations, under this character, might be corrected by many ſchool-boys. With him, neither metaphor nor allegory is allowable in religion! The Book of the Revelations he condemns at once as a book of enigmas; at the ſame time, the 19th Pſalm, which is almoſt a complete allegory, is, in his eſtimation, a *Chef d'œvre!* In fact, if the ſtyle of our religious inſtructions could be ſquared, according to the demonſtrations of Euclid, at which Mr. Paine ſeems to hint, all his reproach upon the Quakers, about "a drab-coloured creation," as the reſult of their taſte, would, with equal propriety, apply to himſelf. Several of Mr. Paine's notions are borrowed, but his criticiſm is all his own.

The ſmall number of Chriſtians, in compariſon with the great majority of Pagans and Mahometans in the world, is an *objection*, I will not call it an *argument*, almoſt idolized by Deiſts and Atheiſts.

iſts. It is, I acknowledge, formidable in its firſt appearance; but, on a cloſe inſpection, it ſoon loſes its conſequence. I will not only admit the relatively ſmall number of Chriſtians in the world, but that they are equally ſmall among ourſelves, ſo few there are who live up to the ſpirit of Chriſtianity. This conceſſion, however, makes nothing againſt the univerſality of the Chriſtian Religion, but rather tends to its eſtabliſhment, becauſe, among Pagans and Mahometans, there are, on the other hand, many who, living above the dictates of thoſe falſe ſyſtems, are, in the beſt ſenſe, true Chriſtians. Hence, as it is expreſſed in Acts x. v. 34, 35. "God is no reſpecter of perſons, but "in every nation he who feareth him and work-"eth righteouſneſs is accepted with him."

Chriſtianity, then, is more of a *principle* than a *profeſſion*; yet any perſon who could undervalue the written word, upon this account, would juſtly fall under the cenſure of the Apoſtle, Romans, chap iii. v. 1, who inſiſts upon the advantage of the Jews over the Gentiles, "Chiefly, that "becauſe unto them were committed the *Ora-*"*cles of God.*" And unbelievers ſhould notice, that the ſame reaſoning, uſed by the Apoſtle, all through the ſecond chapter of the Romans, is exactly applicable to thoſe perſons who, at this time, enjoy the light of revelation, and others who poſſeſs it not. Vain then, are the efforts of Infidels, as they ſay, to *ſimplify Religion;* and futile the attempt to magnify *Reaſon*, by ſuppoſing the *Light of Nature*, and the *Revelation of the Goſpel*, to be one and the ſame! Volney, for this purpoſe, refers me to the remains of Egyptian antiquities; I examine them, and am diſappointed. As well might the bigotted Papiſt appeal to the exterior and venerable appearance of ſome Gothic ſtructure; which

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may be ſurveyed by the rational with a ſigh, while it is worſhipped by the ſuperſtitious: the former, penetrating its inmoſt receſſes, might ſcrutinize the character and principles of the original occupants. The obſervations of the latter, would probably extend no farther than the monuments, the ramifications of the columns, the ſtoried windows and the length of the aiſles! And, as in many old manſions, ſome apartments are kept locked up, under the pretext that they are haunted; ſo, the pretended myſteries of ancient Paganiſm, like the rooms in theſe old manſions, are found, upon the opening, to contain very little, beſides antiquated duſt, or uſeleſs lumber.

And now, oh! ye Reformers of ancient opinions, if your leaders are thus ſuperficial and ignorant, how is it with thoſe that are led? The latter, for implicit faith, are not ſurpaſſed by any of the Chriſtians you condemn. Among theſe, as faith is deſigned to eſtabliſh an object, it produces and preſerves unanimity. Among you, as your negative belief is only calculated to remove every reſtraint, except individual whim and caprice, diſcontent and diſcord ultimately follow. Where all wiſh to command there is none to obey. Thus you neither "enter into reſt yourſelves nor ſuffer others; you can "neither ſeek peace nor enjoy it." Within your own pale, having no crimes or failings which you dare condemn, you are compelled to ſeek them in others! Where every one is a malefactor, none can aſſume the office of cenſor or judge. Where nobility of mind, is not admitted, all are conſidered as baſe; and, having no ſcope for acrimonious propenſities at home, this reſtraint only tends to ſharpen the daggers you prepare for others, and render them ſtill more deſtructive. No longer, of any conſequence to each other, you can hope for no im-

portance,

portance, but in proportion as you diſtinguiſh yourſelves by the inroads which you make upon religion, as your common enemy.

Like the Indian warriors who recommend themſelves by the number of ſcalps they bring in, ſo muſt you exalt yourſelves, or ſink into abſolute inſignificance. Similar to the fallen ſpirits, you have no longer any conſolation but in manifeſting your enmity againſt all who have not involved themſelves in your revolt. Unwilling to *ſerve* in the *Heaven* of Religion, you ſeem determined to *reign* in the *Hell* of your own licentiouſneſs; and, having broken from your original orbit, the harmony and brightneſs of ſuperior intelligences, no longer excite in you, the correſpondent ſenſations of delight and concord.

This parallel, founded upon no fiction, but upon a ſober truth, I ſhall carry no farther, than to obſerve, that while the fallen ſpirits are admitted to be eminent for their *knowledge*, you, not deficient in pride, are the moſt conſpicuous for your *ignorance*.

Into ſuch a community as theirs, who would wiſh to enter, or who, made ſenſible of its ſpirit and tendency, would wiſh to remain? What credit or ſafety can be expected where, religion being excluded, all the bad paſſions are let looſe, or but feebly confined by the ſlender tie of human convenience? Will thoſe who look upon every action, as the reſult of a ſelfiſh or intereſted motive, reſpect either merit or virtue in others? Where virtue has no intereſt, it has, of courſe, no influence. Where depravity is under no check, excellence is of no value. Where ſuperiority creates no generous emulation it is the cauſe of envy. And where benevolence fails to excite gratitude, it only ſtings the receiver with a malignant, or uneaſy ſenſe of his inferiority, and the motives of the donor are conſtrued into

ſelfiſhneſs. Perhaps this is the reaſon that, among the diſciples of the New Philoſophy, *Public Charities* are looked upon a *Public Robberies*. The viſionary reformers of the preſent day have alſo an idea that the ſtate can poſitively prevent *perſonal* and *individual* wretchedneſs!

The genuine philoſopher will not be ſurprized at the contention, and privation of real happineſs among herds of men, equally pretending to philoſophy! If petty ſqabbles and antipathies, in the literary world, have juſtified the poet's obſervation of the natural enmity of wits and authors, a number comparatively ſmall, what is to be expected from a whole community of would-be wits and rival philoſophers? Till modern philoſophy came in with its *moral equality*, other civil bodies uſed to be compoſed of head, feet, hands, and other ſubordinate and correſpondent members; but here is a community that wiſhes to be *all head!!!* Under the contemplation of this chimerical idea, it is difficult to name the ſenſations which it excites.

Before Deiſm and Scepticiſm became faſhionable, or were rarified into Atheiſm; and particularly, when the former was here and there, the opinion of ſome ſpeculatiſt, or ſolitary enthuſiaſt; ſtanding in the ſame relation to multiplied Infidelity as natural, to artificial ſociety; the ſpirit of piety, like the ruſtic virtues and artleſs ſimplicities of unpoliſhed life, would ſomtimes accompany its wanderings. Unconnected with the "corrupt majority" it might then breathe its guileleſs effuſions, to him whoſe temple it conceived "all ſpace," Still, under the mildeſt deſignation we can beſtow, this is a branch, indigenous only to the waſtes of ſociety, and can never be grafted upon the common ſtock. To deſcend from figure; the moſt innocent of Infidel opinions, once liberated from the brain that conceived them, and

left

left to operate, as they *recently have done*, upon large and mixed multitudes, can never be accounted for; the multitudes being ever diſpoſed to carry theſe theories to extremes never thought of by the theoriſt, in whoſe cloſet they originated. The circumſtance of theſe domeſtic opinions being acted upon, by a political revolution abroad, as I have before hinted in the introduction to this work, has alſo given them a feature, altogether unknown in the annals of this country.

It is a mere quackery, in religion or morals, to preſcribe reaſon only, as a ſpecific for the numberleſs diſeaſes of the human mind. Wax is hardened and diſſolved by the ſame ſun. Nor are all men, as the Atheiſts dream, equally diſpoſed to virtue and probity, or even capable of the ſame intellectual attainments. If it were not deemed a crime, by Infidels, to quote Scripture authority, one might ſend theſe modern ſmatterers in philoſophy to that excellent Parable of the Sower, in the New Teſtament, in which they may find an infallible theory of the moral capacities or incapacities of the human kind. Though I ſhould not have referred them to Parables, by any means, had I recollected their common prejudice againſt thoſe parts of the Goſpel, as being purpoſely intended to *obſcure*, and not *illuſtrate*, the truths they ſhould convey! A mode of reaſoning they would not dare apply to the Fables of Æſop; though as our Lord makes no uſe of the perſonification of trees, birds, beaſts, &c. between the perſpicuity and ſimplicity of the one and the other, there is no compariſon. The perverted taſte of Mr. Paine, for literal inſtruction only, has led his imitators to think little of thoſe ſuperior, and more ſtriking modes of impreſſing doctrinal truths, exhibited in the Parable of the good Samaritan, and others contained in the New Teſtament. Yet

that theſe ſerpentine diſpoſitions, which have no zeſt for ſublime truths, ſhould recoil from the depoſitories, in which they are preſerved, is more the ſubject of regret, than aſtoniſhment!

Even the reading of prophane hiſtory, through the medium of your opinions, but too frequently ſtrengthens very hurtful prejudices. General charges and inſinuations againſt religion, and religious men, are not unfrequent among Hiſtorians, eſpecially the moderns. But before you proceed upon ſuch ſhallow grounds, it is neceſſary to weigh the deciſion of one of your own oracles, Mr. David Hume. The practice of arguing againſt any profeſſion, from the abuſe of it, comes from you with a very ill grace, after he has aſſerted, that, "This ſophiſm is one of the groſſeſt, "and, at the ſame time, the moſt common to "which men are ſubject." He alſo obſerves, that, "the hiſtory of all ages offers examples of "the abuſe of religion; but thoſe who would "thence draw an inference to the diſadvantage "of religion in general, would argue very raſhly "and erroneouſly. The proper office of religion "is to reform men's lives, to purify their hearts, to "enforce all the moral duties, and to ſecure obe-"dience to the laws and civil magiſtrate. While "it purſues theſe ſalutary purpoſes, its operations, "though infinitely valuable, are ſilent and ſecret, "and ſeldom come under the cognizance of hiſ-"tory. The hiſtorian, therefore, has ſcarcely any "occaſion to mention any other than that adul-"terate ſpecies of it, which inflames faction, "animates ſedition, diſtinguiſhes itſelf upon the "open theatre of the world, &c. and he may "retain the higheſt regard for true piety, even "while he expoſes all the abuſes of the falſe. "He may even think he cannot better ſhew his "attachment to the former than by detecting the

"latter

" latter, and laying open its abſurdity and per-
" nicious tendency."

To proceed farther, with reſpect to the mental indevotion of the new philoſophers; if the mind can conceive a continual effervescence, or figure to itſelf a family of children in perpetual warfare with their parents, it might have ſome idea of the temper and diſpoſition of modern Infidels towards the Great Creator. While Chriſtians thank him for their creation, the former do not think their preſervation worthy an acknowledgement! In fact, deeper in degeneracy, than any of their predeceſſors, through having more light, they have made themſelves intire ſtrangers to the ſpirit, or exerciſe of devotion towards any object of ſupreme worſhip. Averſe to praiſe, and only alive in cenſuring the harmony and beauties of Creation, Mr. Edmund Burke's idea, of " the heart
" of a thorough-bred metaphyſician, the cold
" malignity of an evil ſpirit, and not the frailty
" and paſſion of a man," is by no means harſh, when applied to you!—To the fond hopes and endearing conceptions of the Chriſtian, you naturally oppoſe the petrifying reſiſtance of the Torpedo! Thus fallen, your mention of the names of a Socrates, or Antoninus, is a profanation. To paſs over your degrading ſentiments of the Divinity, not the regions of Siberia and the gardens of Heſperus can produce a ſtronger contraſt, than the chilling influence of your opinions, ſet in competition with any kind of worſhip, or internal reverence, of which we can conceive!

" Go, then, contracted Infidel! withdraw thy-
" ſelf ſtill farther from the views and comforts of
" thy fellow-men. Still, confined within thy own
" narrow ſphere of reflection, perſuade thyſelf thou
" art not made for immortality. Avail thyſelf,
" then, by any means, of all the advantages of

" the

" the preſent life: add to thy eſtimation of every " periſhable good; and, ſtifling ſympathy for the " ſufferings of others, let thy *own accommodation* " ſupercede every other conſideration. Regard- " leſs of the awards of poſterity, leave it to poets " and orators, to dignify the deſire of immortality, " as the paſſion of great minds: tell them, the " philoſopher, who calculates the reſult of human " actions, is not to be duped with pompous " phraſes. Reply to them, that, thouſands have " periſhed for their country, at Rome and Car- " thage, whoſe names are forgotten. Perſuade " thyſelf, that vices, rather than virtues, tend to " immortalize a name; and, that the records of " hiſtory prefer thoſe who have deſolated the " earth. Tell the advocates for humanity, that " the majority of Heroes have been Tyrants; and " to others, leave the folly of ſowing where they " ſhall never reap.

" From the darkeſt corner of the intellectual " world, thus continue, like the envenomed ſpider, " to envelope thyſelf, and all intelligent beings in " the cobweb-chains of neceſſity. Believe, if thou " canſt, that every action, as well as the means for " obtaining its object, is impelled by a firſt cauſe: " and that even the hand of a murderer is only a " feeble link in the great concatenation of events! " Go on,—but I will withdraw from this precipice, " from whence we cannot look down, but with hor- " ror and dizzineſs."

Having now ſhewn the invalidity of the expectation of Infidels, that any change of the political ſyſtem would be more favourable to their opinions than the preſent; that, under the pretext of improving the faculty of Reaſon, their neglect of proper means to ſtimulate and apply it, has a certain, though indirect, tendency to deſtroy the end propoſed.

Having

Having refuted the charges of cruelty, and a perſecuting ſpirit in the Chriſtian Religion, and urged ſeveral arguments to prove its humanity, ſuperior to the Mahometan or Infidel ſyſtem.

Having made it appear that the condition of Infidel Society, is neceſſarily a ſtate of warfare and competition, ſubverſive of good order, diſcouraging to merit, and deſtitute of proper motives to excite emulation, or prevent a degeneracy of principle and practice: Having ſhewn the danger and novelty of relation, in which theſe ſocieties were placed by political events, the *Quackery of Reaſon* as an univerſal medicine in morals, and the groundleſs prejudices of unbelievers againſt the parables of the New Teſtament.

And laſtly, having demonſtrated their total want of devotional taſte, or veneration of the Supreme Being, or any form of worſhip, I ſhall for the preſent, proſecute theſe charges no farther.

If it be ſaid, that I have lighted up the beacons of alarm, it is granted; but I have invoked no perſecution, nor imprecated any greater puniſhment upon the opinions I explode, than the contempt, and the caution, this expoſure muſt neceſſarily produce.

Detached from any *political agency*, the momentary triumphs of individual, or collective, infidelity, are neither to be envied nor feared. It is a painful pre-eminence, and Infidels well know it, when they again wiſh that to be *true*, which they had perſuaded themſelves was *falſe!* Nor let the reader be ſurpriſed, that I have claſſed Atheiſts and Deiſts indiſcriminately: for the common practice of Infidels, to cover themſelves with the name of *Deiſts*, is a mere pretext, calculated to eſcape the more odious appellation of *Atheiſts*. For thoſe who will not admit of God's moral government of the world; nor allow mortals any knowledge of his attributes;

or who deny, the immortality of the ſoul, I ſay, whatever ſuch perſons may think to the contrary, their notions can never preſent to the *minds* of the *impartial*, any other ideas than thoſe of *doubt*, and a privation of every degree of worſhip or affection; if they do not even exhibit an object of *abſolute averſion* or *contempt:* ſo that between ſuch Deiſm as this, and ſtark Atheiſm, there may be a nominal *diſtinction*, but no *difference*. This idea was very juſtly appreciated by the Biſhop of London, in his Charge to the Clergy of his Dioceſe, in 1794. Speaking of the French; they were, ſaid he, "pre-"tended Deiſts, but real Atheiſts. And although "the name of a Supreme Being was ſometimes "mentioned, yet it was ſeldom mentioned but with "ridicule and contempt. They acknowledged "nothing beyond the grave; and they ſtigmatiſed "all opinions different from theſe, with the names "of ſuperſtition, bigotry, prieſtcraft, fanaticiſm, "and impoſture.

Theſe dangerous opinions were rendered more illuſive, by the great names that ſanctioned them; but as none of them are more familiar than that of Voltaire, I would caution the young and unwary, againſt any ſeductive influence upon this head. It is wrong, in the Infidels, to oppoſe, as they do, the *diſbelief* of the French Wit, to the *belief of Chriſtianity* by the immortal Newton. For, granting that Voltaire deſerved the panegyric of a German Nobleman, who entitles him "the divine Magician "whoſe breath diſſipated the thick cloud that "covered all Europe, and obſerves, that happier "in his attempts than Orpheus, he did not ſtop at "humanizing the furies, but metamorphoſed the "monſters of intolerance, fanaticiſm, and blood, "into humane and ſociable beings:" I ſay, unleſs it could be proved that theſe monſters, againſt whom this giant of French literature exerted himſelf

himſelf, were the *legitimate offspring of Chriſtianity*, theſe pompous phraſes mean nothing. But till the tolerating ſpirit of Proteſtants, and the perſecuting genius of the Church of Rome, be proved one and the ſame, the Chriſtianity *believed* by Newton, and *diſbelieved* by Voltaire, will remain as eſſentially different as light and darkneſs.

The Rev. Mr. Fellowes, in his Chriſtian Philoſophy, with others I could mention, are of the opinion, that the late enmity of the French Infidels, againſt Chriſtianity in *general*, was at firſt excited by the *particular* enormities and corruptions of the Romiſh Church, "which accumulating for cen-
"turies, at laſt produced a monſter, which devoured
"its mother. The Deiſtical philoſophers might,
"ſays he, have haſtened its birth, but they had no
"ſhare in its formation. Had they been the eſ-
"ſential cauſe of the decline of Chriſtianity, the
"ſame cauſe exiſting ſtill, would have prevented
"its revival; but the beſt informed travellers aſſure
"us, that Infidelity itſelf is declining, now the
"cauſe, which produced it, is no more."

More, and undeniable evidence of this decline, and the conſequent revival of Chriſtianity in France, has ſince been brought forward by the invitation given by Bonaparte, to the return of the Clergy; the opening of a greater number of churches, and his own attendance in perſon, at divine worſhip. The conductors too of the public prints, who, during Robeſpierre's tyranny, had profeſſed themſelves Atheiſts, though all of them may not be ſincere in their recantation, acknowledged their faith in Chriſtianity, in the courſe of March, 1800; a circumſtance, ſufficiently indicating the altered ſtate of the public mind in the French nation.

Now, as a collateral proof of the remarks by Mr. Fellowes, which were written in 1798, it ſeems this

decline had made ſuch progreſs in the ſummer of 1799, as to occaſion the ſhutting up of the Theophilanthropic Temple, and the opening of ſeveral churches in the French capital. But without reſting upon theſe events, as facts, there are ſeveral natural reaſons, from which a true philoſopher may infer, "that the Chriſtian Religion, ſtripped of its "abuſes, will take a deeper root than before, in "the minds and affections of the French people. "Nor is it unworthy of remark, that the late Rev. Mr. "Fletcher, of Madeley, wrote a letter from Macon, "in Burgundy, in 1778, in which he obſerved, that "Popery would fall in France in this or the next "century." He adds, "I make no doubt, God "will uſe thoſe vain men (the Voltaires, Rouſſeaus, "Mirabeaus, &c.) to bring about a reformation "here, as he uſed Henry VIII. to do that work "in England: ſo the madneſs of his enemies "will at laſt turn to his praiſe and the furtherance "of his kingdom."

I ſhall only obſerve, that of the permanence of this approaching change, no rational doubt can be entertained. Having borne the laſt and moſt violent ſhocks of Apoſtacy and Infidelity, no hope now remains for the Infidel, that the light of Chriſtianity ſhall ever be extinguiſhed, but with time itſelf. The veil of pretended philoſophy has been torn aſunder, and its features expoſed to ſhame and deriſion; while the beauties of Religion have increaſed ſeven-fold. This bright conſtellation having received its impetus from the hand of the Divinity, no human effort can reſiſt its progreſs. That it may penetrate the darkeſt regions of the earth, ought to be the ſincere wiſh of every man, who has the leaſt pretence to ſound reaſon or underſtanding.

POST-

POSTSCRIPT.

Chronological Sketch of the Origin, and Progreſs of Infidelity, in England, anterior to the French Revolution.—Remarks upon Profeſſor Robiſon.—New Illuſtrations of German Literature.—Beautiful Tranſlation from Profeſſor Ramler.—Vindication of the Sedition-Bills.—Declining State of Democratical Politics.—Phyſical and Moral Superiority of the Ariſtocracy in every Nation and Government.

As it is natural for the mind, when taking a view of any multiform, or mighty maſs of matter, to inquire from whence, or by what means, it accumulated, ſo, in reflecting upon the late increaſe of Infidelity in this country, I was led to conclude, that the developement of the various ſources of this evil could not be indifferent to a curious inveſtigator of men and manners.

However indiſputable the Rev. Henry Kett's aſſertion may be, "that the ideas of Infidelity, "which had been long floating in the world, were "firſt embodied into a practical ſyſtem of wicked-"neſs, by Voltaire, and others," I muſt ſtill beg leave to fix its æra in England, long before the writings of Bolingbroke made their appearance; this I muſt aſcribe to a period of hiſtory, which bears a nearer reſemblance than any other to recent tranſactions in France, *viz.* the period of the civil wars,

between Charles I. and his Parliament. Then churches were converted into ſtables, or ruins, and their miniſters driven into exile; while their ſucceſſors were divided into various ſects, alternately ſupporting the moſt abſurd, impious, and extravagant, opinions, whoſe variety of creeds naturally tended to the diſcredit of all religious authority.

During this period, I ſay, it cannot be doubted, but as one extreme always produces another, ſo the impiety and fanaticiſm of the ſixteenth century were as properly the parent of the Infidelity that ſucceeded it, as the late maſſacres and proſcriptions in France were conſequences of the rejection of the milder doctrines of the Goſpel; and the reſult of a decree, that "death is an eternal "ſleep!"

That much Infidelity did ſucceed the civil wars of Charles I. was moſt viſible in the licentious reign of his ſucceſſor; and may alſo be gathered from the many treatiſes written againſt avowed and unqualified Atheiſm before the cloſe of the ſixteenth century: even the learned Dr. Henry More did not think the Atheiſm of that time beneath his attention.

This monſtrous feature, in the religious hiſtory of this country, did not eſcape the French writers; Boſſuet in particular ſeems to treat Free-thinking, "as the laſt refuge of minds tired out with reli- "gious wars, and the revolutions to which they "gave riſe."

Charles II. Monſieur Groſley obſerves, "either "through a ſecret attachment to the Roman Ca- "tholic religion, or from views merely political, "favoured the Free-thinking turn of his ſub- "jects."

James II. to increaſe a toleration that ſuited his purpoſe, ſuffered all the Latudinarians, among the Noncon-

Nonconformiſts, to eſcape notice; and, in the reign of William III. it is obſerved, that Shafteſbury and and his admirers thought very freely upon religious ſubjects.

In 1696, John Toland publiſhed his Chriſtianity not Myſterious; a work publicly burnt in Dublin, as ſoon as it appeared; but, flying to England, the author and his book were left unmoleſted.

Encouraged by this reception, in 1699, he publiſhed the Life of Milton; in which, inſinuating his doubts concerning the authenticity of the Old and New Teſtaments, he next anſwered his numerous objectors, in another work, intituled, Amyntor.

The ineffectual oppoſition made to theſe writings, by the inferior Clergy, aſſembled in convocation in 1702—*(See Life of Toland prefixed to his Works, in* 1725) only tended to increaſe their popularity and reputation.

In 1705, the Works of Lord Herbert, of Cherbury, were firſt publiſhed in Engliſh.

In 1713, Collins's Diſcourſe upon the Riſe and Growth of a Sect, called Free-thinkers, ſerved to increaſe the conſequence of that party; the more ſo, from the number of replies made to it by Dr. Bentley, and other Clergymen.

In 1716, it may be ſuppoſed, that Free-thinking had made ſome progreſs in the genteel or literary world, as a very ſenſible and well-written pamphlet made its appearance in behalf of the belief of a providence, &c. addreſſed to the Wits, at Button's Coffee-houſe; not Addiſon, Steel, or Arbuthnot, it is ſuppoſed, but ſome of the minor geniuſes.

In the reign of George I. Socinianiſm, ſo near a-kin to Deiſm, was diſclaimed by that monarch, who, as head of the church, publiſhed a proclamation, prohibiting the diſſemination of ſuch

writings as were favourable to the new opinions concerning the Trinity.

The New Annual Regiſter, for 1782, obſerves, "that the firſt and moſt formidable attack upon "the Chriſtian religion was made by Lord Her- "bert, of Cherbury. Collins, was afterwards fol- "lowed by Toland; and Tindal's Chriſtianity, as Old "as the Creation, ſucceeded to Morgan's Moral "Philoſophy; then came the more ſubtle perform- "ance of Chriſtianity not founded on Argument."

From Biſhop Gibſon's Paſtoral Letter, in 1729, though principally directed againſt Woolſton's Treatment of the Miracles, and the publications of Chubb, which immediately ſucceeded, and continued till 1749, it appears, that no reſpite was ſuffered to take place. It ſhould alſo be obſerved, that, between 1730 and 1744, the firſt period being that which produced the famous controverſy of the Reſurrection, and the celebrated pamphlet, the Tryal of the Witneſſes: there were three editions of a Deiſtical Anſwer to the ſame, by Mr. Peter Annet; beſides two other pamphlets written by him, *viz.* the Reſurrection Reconſidered, and, laſtly, the Reſurrection Defenders ſtripped of all Pretences. Theſe things, from the conveniency of their price, and the zeal of the party who diſtributed them, who, no doubt, conſidered themſelves as a riſing Sect, certainly had their weight in ſhaking the pillars of popular opinion, among the middling and lower ranks of men.

Under the reign of George II. "the philoſophy "of Shafteſbury, became ſo far predominant, that, "for a number of years, no book was more uni- "verſally admired, or more generally read, among "people of taſte and faſhion, than that nobleman's "Characteriſtics."

Theſe

Theſe were ſucceeded by the publication of Lord Bolingbroke's Eſſays, about the year 1754, by his friend Mallet; of whom Dr. Johnſon obſerved, "that he diſcharged the blunderbuſs, the "noble author had left loaded, againſt the religion "of his country." Queen Caroline, it is alſo reported, was favourably diſpoſed towards theſe heterodox opinions.

In Monſieur Groſley's New Obſervations on England, in 1765, he obſerves, that Catholics, Church of England men, Methodiſts, &c. all make a common cauſe againſt a Sect which every day gains ground; I mean *Free-thinking*.

Relative to the original Debating Societies, perhaps the ultimate celebrity of the Robin Hood, the firſt of theſe dangerous Schools of Eloquence, or the impatience of ſome of its members to appear in print, was the cauſe of the proſecution of Peter Annet, one of its members, and his ſentence of one year's impriſonment in Newgate, with an expoſure in the pillory. Nor had the final diſperſion of this Society, about 1773, ſcarcely taken place, before the Infidel ſyſtem was transferred, with increaſing attractions, into the cloſet, by the faſhionable reception of the writings of Hume, and the daily improvements of Voltaire, D'Alembert, and the French philoſophers in general.

The aſſociation at the Robin Hood, it cannot be doubted, had left the ſeeds of Infidelity deeply rooted in many of the members, who recollected the ſpeeches of Annet; Dr. Lucas, of Dublin; and other orators of no mean talents. Among theſe people, the proſecution of Annet was a frequent ſource of converſation; while the kindneſs he experienced, from the amiable and ever memorable Archbiſhop Secker, was forgotten, or only confined to the knowledge of a few.

During

During Annet's impriſonment, in Newgate, that worthy primate, I have been told, ſent to make ſome inquiry into his pecuniary affairs, and offered ſome comfortable aſſiſtance, which Annet, far advanced in years, did not live to enjoy; and from the following paſſage of the preſent Biſhop of London's Review of the life of Archbiſhop Secker, it appears, that Mr. Annet was not the only object of ſuch generous treatment on the part of the primate. "Whenever any pub-
" lications came to his knowledge that were
" manifeſtly calculated to corrupt good morals,
" or ſubvert the foundations of Chriſtianity,
" he did his utmoſt to ſtop the circulation
" of them: yet the wretched authors them-
" ſelves, he was ſo far from wiſhing to treat
" with any undue rigour, that he has more
" than once, extended his bounty to them in
" diſtreſs." The tranſlation of the whole works of Voltaire, and their repeated publication in ſixpenny numbers, was alſo the means of putting the public in poſſeſſion of his plauſible dialogues between a Chriſtian and an Honeſt Man, a Caloyerian, &c. And theſe were again multiplied, when the complete ſets being ſold off, the remains were a ſecond time diſſeminated among an inferior order of readers, by their expoſure upon the bookſellers ſtalls, in common with ſecond-hand magazines, at no more than one penny a number.

As under parts to the principal acts of Infidelity, upon the grand ſtage of literature, it might have been obſerved, that, for near a century paſt, Blount's Oracles of Reaſon, Collins on the Free-thinkers, &c. have lain upon the bookſellers ſtalls, courting the inſpection of paſſengers; and that, after the public had been

accommodated,

accommodated, in the ſame way, with the waſte paper of Morgan, Mandeville, Annet, Chubb, and all the ſecond race of Infidels, near half a century; by way of a more refined entertainment, the circulating libraries were ſupplied with the Eloiſa and Emilius of John James Rouſſeau, and other tranſlations from the French, equally ſubverſive of good morals. To the literary abilities, above vulgar ken, we may add, thoſe of Gibbon, the hiſtorian; The Apology for the Life and Writings of David Hume, and that impertinent parade about his domeſtic virtues, ſo ſmartly replied to by the late Dr. Horne; and, next to theſe, we might reckon the cheap editions of the Philoſophical Dictionary, by Voltaire; printed at London and York.

Upon the whole, from the recollection of the remote concatenation here adduced, it may be preſumed, that Infidelity had attained a degree of *relative antiquity*, and thus impoſed upon many, who would have rejected a *novelty*, as hazardous and queſtionable.

But, after all, where Infidelity has failed of complete ſucceſs, many upon whom it has operated have been, at leaſt, brought under Socinianiſm, the *Frozen Zone* of religion, even if it can deſerve the name; for, before Dr. Prieſtley had attained to his paſt celebrity as a *divine*, this opinion undoubtedly had its effects in deadening the human heart. But, when his improvements upon it, were dignified with the name of *philoſophy*, the warm tide of intellectual life immediately ceaſed to flow. The character of a *materialiſt* was fixed, and all the benignant ſources of genuine Chriſtianity, which might have been expected in this quarter, were hermetically ſealed.

It was this great chemiſt who reduced all the ideas of the grand enemy of the human race to a mere "*perſonification of human paſſions;*" from whence, and ſimilar refinements in what was called the "*corruptions of Chriſtianity,*" a diſcuſſion of queſtions, in the debating ſocieties, on a Sunday evening, previous to 1781, ſubverſive of all the fundamentals of our religion, operated as a ſufficient juſtification of the Sunday Reformation-Bill, paſſed in that year, which, by prohibiting the taking of money at the doors, put a temporary ſtop to the increaſe of Infidelity in the lower orders.

But this hydra had too many heads to be cruſhed at once; for, in 1786, it was remarked by Archdeacon Paley in his Moral Philoſophy, "That Infi-
" delity is now ſerved up in every ſhape that is
" likely to allure, ſurprize, or beguile, the imagi-
" nation, in a fable, a tale, a novel, or a poem,
" in interſperſed or broken hints, remote and ob-
" lique ſurmiſes, in books of travels, of philoſo-
" phy, of natural hiſtory, in a word, in any form
" rather than that of a profeſſed and regular diſ-
" quiſition."

As to ſocieties which ſubſiſted in the interval which I have gone over, that in Margaret-ſtreet, Oxford-road, was the next, both in the order of time and in its publicity, to that of the Robin Hood. But neither the gentleman, then known by the appellation of the *Prieſt of Nature*, and who delivered Deiſtical lectures in his chapel, in 1775-6, nor his congregation, ſhould, by any means, be ranked with thoſe peſtiferous clubbiſts of late date; although it unfortunarely happened that his renewal of a dangerous profeſſion of falſe philoſophy continued the concatenation of Infidelity nearer to the æra of the French Revolution, which,

which, afterwards co-operating with thoſe principles, increaſed the number of Engliſh Infidels beyond all precedent.

From the period when the above-mentioned lectures, in Margaret-ſtreet, had cloſed, till the publication of the Age of Reaſon; Deiſm, and the heterodox opinions of the times, ſeemed to have taken up their laſt refuge in a pretty numerous circle, near Hoxton, among a kind of *Infidel Myſtics*, known to ſtangers, from the circumſtance of broaching their ſentiments in ſome writings and public places, by the appellation of *Ancient Deiſts*, as well as from the profeſſion of their belief in the eternity of the univerſe, &c. This place, being attended by ſome perſons above the common line of life, finally operated as a kind of vortex, which naturally attracted the reſtleſs and diſſatisfied of every ſect within its circle. Here human learning was declaimed againſt, as one of the greateſt enemies to human happineſs or the improvement of the intellect, and dreams, viſions, and immediate revelations, were recommended as a ſubſtitute! The faculty of foretelling future events was alſo inſiſted upon; the diſcernment of ſpirits, by the phyſiognomy, the voice, the gait, &c. together with the poſſibility of converſing with departed ſouls. In fact, thoſe pretences were carrried ſo far, that any viſitor, not in the habit of hearing ſupernatural voices, or not informed of the common occurrences of the day, by the miniſtration of Angels, would have been treated as a novice, and a diſciple of the loweſt form.

It was by no means unnatural, that this aſſemblage ſhould be made up of Alchymiſts, Aſtrologers, Calculators, Myſtics, Magnetizers, Prophets, and Projectors, of every claſs. In fact, this community ſeemed "to embrace all the ec-

" centric modes, ſectaries, viſionaries, fanatics,
" enthuſiaſts, rationaliſts, and every other name,
" into which affectation, whim, folly, or caprice,
" divide the populace.

Several of the members of this ſociety have diſtinguiſhed themſelves, in their habits and manners, truly eccentric; but, as a deſcription of them would be too long for the preſent purpoſe, I ſhall only obſerve, that, there was ſo little of real religion in their compoſition, that it almoſt immediately yielded to the ſtronger impulſe of the French Revolution, and terminated in the general converſion of the members into *politicians* and *inquirers after news*.

What has occurred among ſucceeding aſſociations, ſince the period laſt mentioned, has been ſufficiently noticed in the former part of this work.

Relative to Profeſſor Robiſon's Hiſtory of a Conſpiracy, &c. I ſhall now obſerve, that, after the minute details, given by him and the Abbé Barruel, of the object of the French and German affiliations, no perſons, unleſs they are totally abſorbed in prejudice, can any longer affect to look upon the relations of theſe authors, as being raked together, merely to ſerve a party-purpoſe.

Without the evidence which they have adduced, it certainly would demand ſome ſtretch of credulity, to admit that Deiſts and Atheiſts have aſſociated, near half a century, for the ſole purpoſe, as Voltaire expreſſes it, to " *Ecrazer l'Infame*," *viz.* Cruſh the Wretch, Chriſt! However, the only difference between the Engliſh and French Infidels, is, in the term of their exiſtence; the latter had arrived at maturity, while the former, being anticipated in their view, a ſalutary check was oppoſed to their progreſs,

progreſs, before they were capable of feeling their ſtrength.

Every good member of ſociety, now enjoying the benefit of a ſtate of internal tranquillity, or comparing it with the ſtorms and convulſions of a neighbouring kingdom, will, next to Providence, bleſs the means of his preſervation; and, penetrated by the advantages he enjoys, they will at leaſt inſpire him with a tacit juſtification of meaſures, at firſt, perhaps, deemed harſh. I mean, thoſe meaſures which have been adopted by a vigilant government, and which have, undeniably, prevented the diſorder and confuſion which muſt have otherwiſe enſued.

The blind tools of a party, and ſhallow politicians, may continue declaiming againſt what they deem unneceſſary violations of the forms of the conſtitution, as if the executive could at all time be uſeful without a diſcretionary and a diſpenſing power.

It is to very little purpoſe, that ſome people argue, that, the modern democratic party has really or apparently received the ſanction of ſome reſpectable names in this country, both in and out of the ſenate. But if any ſuch perſons have flattered themſelves, that a Parliamentary Reform was the *real object*, and not merely the *ſtalking-horſe* of the ſocieties, their want of information is really to be pitied. They muſt have known very little of the hatred borne to all the privileges of birth or acquirements, or of the frenzy, which ſometimes raged in the brains of their humble friends in the city, and eaſtern ſuburbs; or how impatient they were of the tardy proceedings in St. Stephen's Chapel; the ſafety and continuance of which was principally owing to an augmentation of the aſſociated Volunteer-Corps. Of courſe they muſt be ignorant of the obligations they are under

under to thoſe who directed this military force, and actually prevented the madneſs of democracy from a phaeton-like aſſumption of the reins of government; from whence the whole iſland might have been kindled into a combuſtion more deſtructive than the inſurrection of Jack Cade, or any of the diſorders of his ſucceſſors. I will even hazard the ſuppoſition, no Volunteer-Aſſociations being formed, that republican frenzy had proceeded ſo far as to corrupt the Guards, and *ſeize* or *maſſacre* the whole Houſe of Commons; or as many of them as they found ſitting; could theſe madmen ſuppoſe any men, or ſet of men, would have accepted of the government at their hands, reeking with the blood of the Senate? I truſt there are none, who bear the name of Britons, ſo loſt to the dignity of the national character, or of a caſt ſo ſanguinary or degraded. Of courſe, hating both the treaſon and the traitors, the ſhocking deed would have reverted, with tenfold vengeance and remorſe, upon the heads of the perpetrators; while its reſults muſt have juſtified the moſt afflicting, and, perhaps, unheard-of recrimination. I intimated, that the ſafety of the ſittings of the Houſe of Commons was owing to the formation of the Volunteer-Corps, while democracy raged in this metropolis. I repeat it: for, notwithſtanding not more than one perſon, as far as I recollect, has been convicted of ſeducing the ſoldiery from their allegiance, ſuch attempts, among the Clubbiſts, were not caſual, but part of a ſyſtem conſtantly acted upon. To mingle with, and to treat, the ſoldiery was as much a part of the duty, while the Clubs exiſted, as it was to meet at the diviſion-rooms; and reports of progreſs, in this undertaking, were conſtantly made and applauded.

I may neither have the abilities to pronounce, nor the conſequence to ſubſtantiate, a panegyric upon eminent characters; but as the effects of meaſures are the beſt comment upon the abilities of the men who produced them, let us farther ſuppoſe, for argument ſake, that, after the recent adoption of French revolutionary principles in this country, the government had delayed the puniſhment or prevention of any overt-act, till matters had proceeded as far as they were carried in 1780! Will any of their accuſers, then, take upon them to ſay where the conſequences would have ended? I will now hazard a contraſt: the popular tumult of 1780, without any national views, and without any leaders to direct its movements, eventually coſt the lives of two hundred perſons; while the more recent deſperate ſcheme, to overturn all the conſtituted authorities of this kingdom, has been baffled, by the mere impriſonment of leſs than half that number, many of whom were afterwards liberated.

That government in diſperſing theſe ſocieties, and hindering their re-organization, have acted upon the principle, that "prevention is better than puniſhment," I believe might be juſtified by ſome who have ſmarted moſt ſeverely for their attachment to republicaniſm. The *diet*, and not the *impriſonment*, in the Houſe in Cold-Bath-Fields, being their principal complaint. But even this was not permanent; it being now ſome months ſince the few confined for ſeditious practices have been put upon the allowance of ſtate-priſoners, while their wives and families, in order that the innocent might not ſhare the puniſhment of the guilty, have had an allowance from government of half-a-guinea, and fifteen ſhillings, per week.

But

But it is not impoſſible to add to the teſtimonies brought by Profeſſor Robiſon, as to the real views of the ſelf-named philoſophers: the following paſſage in the late Lord Orford's Letters, written in 1765, and which could not be brought forward to promote the views of a party, may now ſerve our purpoſe with double effect:

" The Dauphin, ſays he, will probably hold " out very few days. His death, that is, the " near proſpect of it, fills the philoſophers with " the greateſt joy, as it was feared he would en- " deavour the reſtoration of the Jeſuits. You will " think the ſentiments of *the philoſophers* very odd " ſtate-news; but, do you know who the philoſo- " phers are, or what the term means here? in the " firſt place, it comprehends almoſt every body; " and, in the next, men, who, avowing war againſt " Popery, *aim, many of them, at a ſubverſion of* " *all religion; and ſtill many more at the deſtruc-* " *tion of regal power.* How do you know this? " you will ſay; you, who have been but ſix weeks in " France, three of which you have been confined " to your chamber. True: but in the firſt period " I went every where, and heard nothing elſe; " in the latter, I have been extremely viſited, and " have had long and explicit converſations with " many who think as I tell you, and with a few " of the other ſide who are no leſs perſuaded that " there are ſuch intentions. In particular, I had " two officers here the other night, neither of them " very young, whom I had difficulty to keep from " a ſerious quarrel, and who, in the heat of the " diſpute, informed me of much more than I could " have learned with great pains." Vol. V. p. 123.

In addition to the more recondite collection of facts, which the Profeſſor has ſelected from the German language, I ſhall next notice a Memorial, written

in 1733, upon Secret Aſſemblies: Vide, Des Herrn Baron Von Holberg's ubrige Kleine Schriften, Copenhagen printed, 1755. In this work, ſays Baron Holberg, "I deemed it neceſſary to publiſh my Philoſophical Conſiderations upon the "ſubject of Secret Societies, becauſe it is notorious, that, at this period, ſeveral of them exiſt "in various parts of Germany, the propagation "of whoſe extravagant opinions ſeem calculated "to excite deſpair rather than devotion."

But whatever might have been the preciſe object of theſe Secret Aſſemblies, the ſtriking ſimilarity, which the Baron traces out between the cauſes that led to the death of Charles I. of England, and thoſe we have witneſſed preceding the late French Revolution; I ſay, whatever the views of the former might have been, he makes it appear, that, the proceedings of the Engliſh regicides in that reign, like the recent commotions in France, cauſed ſome alarm, and the adoption of meaſures of precaution in ſome of the neighbouring ſtates. We ſee, ſays Baron Holberg, (in his Conſiderations before-mentioned) from an Ordinance, publiſhed, Wintermonat, December 24, 1655, that our gracious Sovereign, Frederic III. ſtifled the Secret Aſſemblies, of that period, in their birth; not ſo much on account of the falſe doctrines which they taught, but for fear of the bad conſequences uſually reſulting from ſuch private meetings; the effects of which, we had learned by experience. And farther, that what was, *at firſt, only the buſineſs of the Clergy, or the Police, at length required the aſſiſtance of the Military.*— The grand Rebellion of England, the Baron goes on to ſay, has ſupplied us with proofs of the effects of theſe diviſions. That tragedy, which has occaſioned ſo much prejudice to Religion and

the State, had the ſame kind of beginning, *viz. Secret Aſſemblies, Attacks upon Public Worſhip, Prophecies, The expectation of the Millenium, An equal diviſion of Property, or the poſſeſſion of all things in common. Gleicheit unter Menſchen zu ſteften, viz. the Inſtitution of Equality among Mankind and the like!!!* His Daniſh Majeſty, therefore, thinking it neceſſary to uſe a timely preventative of the evil of Secret Societies, iſſued the following Ordinance againſt them:

" Wir Friedrick der Dritte, &c. thun hiemit " kund und zu wiſſen: Da unſere Vorfahren ſo- " wohl, als wir, es beſtandig unſere vornehmſte " Sorge haben ſeyn laſſen, daſs das heilige und " wahre Wort Gottes rein und lauter erhalten " und bewahret werde, ſo haben wir doch er- " fahren, wie der Meiſter der den Weizen mit " dem Unkraut zu unterdrucken und zu werder- " ben ſuchet, das heilige Predigtampt und Mi- " niſterium in Verachtung zu bringen ſuchet, in- " ſonderheit dadurch, daſs er durch heimliche und " ſchadliche Zuſammenkunfte, die ſo es nicht beſ- " ſer verſtehen, vo unſerer Kirche, und dem " gebrauchlichen Gotteſdienſt abzuleiten ver- " ſuchet. Daher is unſer ernſtlicher Wille und " Befehl, an alle hohe und niedrige Obrigkeit, " daſs ſi darauf Acht haben, ſo, wie ſie es vor " uns zu verantworten gedenken, &c."

To the following effect:

" We, Frederick III. &c. hereby declare, and " make known: ſince it has been the conſtant care " of our predeceſſors, as well as ourſelves, to re- " tain and preſerve the true and ſacred Word of " God in its purity; and as we have learned, " that certain perſons are endeavouring to cor- " rupt and to tread down the wheat with the tares, " and to bring the Miniſtry and the ſacred offices

of

" of religion into contempt, eſpecially by the means
" of ſecret and ſcandalous meetings, by which
" they endeavour to lead the ignorant and un-
" wary from the eſtabliſhed worſhip and practice
" of our churches: it is, therefore, our abſolute
" Will and Command, that all our Magiſtrates pay
" the ſtricteſt attention to theſe Secret Aſſemblies,
" as they will otherwiſe be reſponſible to us for
" their neglect, &c."

That no doubt might remain, whether any of the Secret Societies, hinted at by the Baron, were political, it is ſufficient to indicate, that, within a very few years after, he thought them a proper ſubject for Satire in his Comedy, intituled, *Der Politiche Kangieſſer*, or, *the Political Pewterer;* of which, from Gottſched's German Theatre, I attempted an Engliſh tranſlation, for private amuſement, ſome time ſince. Gottſched, it ſhould be obſerved, cauſed it to be tranſlated from the Daniſh, between 1746 and 1750, under the title above-mentioned; but, from ſome ſimilarity of the piece, with our Upholſterer, I choſe to give it the title of THE DEMOCRAT CURED, or, *the Upholſterer of Dantzick.* The Baron deſcribes the Club, of which the Hero is a leading member, with ſingular humour and propriety, eſpecially when contraſted with the views and capacities of ſome, who have borne the name of Reforming Societies, in this metropolis. He alſo plies him with ſuch a ſucceſſion of embarraſſments, in conſequence of his being impoſed upon, with the belief that he is choſen a Burgomaſter, that he is only ſaved from deſtroying himſelf by an explanation made to him by a Mr. *Worthy*, to whom, till then, he had refuſed to give his conſent to marry his daughter, in conſequence of his being *no politician!* In the *dénoüement* of the piece, the author makes him

order the burning of all his political pamphlets: and he leaves the ſtage, after moſt appoſitely obſerving, " It is true, one may eaſily condemn a " government in theory, without having any idea " of the practical part. So, to have a general " notion of a Sea-chart, and to underſtand the art " of navigation, are two things eſſentially different. " In reading political tracts, it is alſo eaſy to ob- " tain a facility in ſpeaking upon a variety of " ſubjects; but much more than this, is neceſſary " to underſtand the conſtitution of a country. " From what has befallen me to-day, every per- " ſon, of the ſame rank in ſociety, may derive " an exemplary conviction, that a man, who has " no other capacity than that of cenſuring his " ſuperiors and governors, muſt be totally unfit " to adminiſter in their places. For an illiterate " Mechanic, to take upon him the office of a " Stateſman, is juſt the ſame as if the latter " ſhould aſſume the profeſſion of the former with- " out any previous inſtruction."

Thus far, as to the ſimilarity of cauſes and effects, and the general opinion of the friends of good government, relative to Secret Societies, in England, France, and Germany. As to the *variety* of the means, adopted in thoſe countries, for promoting their purpoſes, and the *few* made uſe of by the Engliſh Societies, the latter was probably for want of time; eſpecially, if the opinion, " That the Engliſh generally improve " upon the diſcoveries made by the French," can apply in this particular.

Profeſſor Robiſon has moſt copiouſly diſplayed the addreſs of the French and German Illuminati, in qualifying their revolutionary poiſon to all ſtates and conditions of men; and has intimated, more than once, that it was a principal object with them,

them, to render the preſent ſtate of ſociety, odious, by a fictitious diſplay of the indolent pleaſures of the patriarchal life. It was their deſign, as he expreſſes it, in page 161, of his Proofs of a Conſpiracy, to make the head of every family, what Abraham was, their Patriarch, Prieſt, and unlettered Lord; and Reaſon, the Code of Laws to all mankind. And, as an additional inſtance of this diſpoſition, and the nefarious profanation of talents made uſe of to promote it, my readers may take the following tranſlation from the French, ſelected from an Imitation of the Pſalms of David, in poetic proſe, and like them in the Engliſh, and ſome other Rubrics, inſiduouſly adapted to each day of the month:

" God of my Fathers! when ſhall the patriarchal " ages reviſit the earth?

" Then were men worthy of thy preſence, " and thou didſt deign to viſit them with thy " bounty.

" Then the ruſtic altars, upon the ſacred moun- " tains, were neither loaded with gold, nor ſtained " with blood.

" Then thy miniſters, clothed in linen and " crowned with flowers, were not eloquent; " but their hearts were as pure and as ſimple as " their offerings.

" Then the father of the family, king of his " houſehold, had no other ſceptre but his paſ- " toral ſtaff.

" Without ſword or balance, he adminiſtered " juſtice at the foot of an Oak, or before the " door of his Cottage.

" Plain ſenſe and an upright mind were his " code of laws.

" Then Sincerity watched at the doors, and " Security was an attendant at the bed.

" The

" The ſounds of the locks and keys of Suſ-
" picion were not heard, in the evening or the
" morning.

" Then, Oh! my God, man added nothing
" to thy gifts, but received them as they came
" from thy hand:

" Blood never ſtained his lips, neither was he
" preſerved by the deſtruction of uſeful and peace-
" able animals.

" Then was the marriage-union, formed in the
" face of Heaven, without a witneſs, and with-
" out a prieſt.

" Then, in the perſon of his father, the ſon ſaw
" his God, clothed in the human form.

" Then, Oh! God of my fathers, thy thunder
" ſlept at thy feet, and thy right hand was in-
" ceſſantly held forth to bleſs thy children.

" Then thou didſt not repent of thy work;
" but the minds of men were like a ſpotleſs
" mirror, in which thou waſt pleaſed to multiply
" thine image.

" It is time, Oh! Lord, that thou ſhouldſt re-
" ſtore thoſe days upon the earth; that ſerene and
" beautiful period, which ſhould be had in ever-
" laſting rememberance."

Upon the abuſe of French and German literature, I ſhall dwell no longer. To this there are many brilliant exceptions, particularly, a pamphlet, publiſhed in 1794, entitled, *Blick auf die Franzoſiche Revolution—Von einem Freunde des Volkes und der Regierungen.*" As far as this untranſlated " View of the French Revolution, by a friend to mankind and governments," exhibits the origin of that inexhauſtable event, in cauſes, never likely to occur in England, I ſhall quote a few paſſages, after premiſing, as the moſt oſtenſible part of my apology for ſo doing, that no farther knowledge

of

of the author may be neceſſary, than what is to be collected from the following note at the bottom of page 112. Alluding to the French Emigrants, it is there ſaid:

" Since there are nobles of the preſent day who " perſuade themſelves, that none but perſons of " equal rank have a right to decide upon points of " honour, we wiſh to remind them, that our author " is no leſs known by his ſword than his pen; that " he is no ſtranger in the Cabinet or the field; and " that, in reſpect to birth, he might challenge the " moſt ancient and illuſtrious houſes."

" It would, ſays this noble author, be a glorious " example to the world, ſhould a great nation " awaken inſtantaneouſly, after many ages of ſervi- " tude and indifference, and, with true magnanimity, " trace ſociety up to its original ſource, found its " rights upon the principles of eternal juſtice, and, " at the ſame time, poſſeſs ſufficient wiſdom to keep " them under the dominion of reaſon, confining " even liberty itſelf within inviolable limits.

" But who is capable of cementing an union " between extremes ſo diſtant from each other, as " inflexible prudence and violent enthuſiaſm? It " is highly probable, that a nation, giving itſelf " up to the guidance of philoſophers, would be " wanting in that energy, which alone is capable " of overturning the thrones of deſpotiſm and pre- " judice. This energy, is the ſole inheritance of " the paſſions. On the contrary, if this nation " ſhould conſiſt of men, animated with the ſpirit " of liberty, men, who had encountered and ſuper- " ſeded every difficulty, can it be ſuppoſed, that, " while flushed with ſucceſs, they will liſten and " implicitly adhere to the diſpaſſionate voice of " that reaſon, which places true liberty under the " dominion of the laws, and fixes the welfare of

" civilized

" civilized ſociety, in almoſt an intire ſacrifice of " the natural independence of man?

" The ſame genius which plans a revolution " ſhould conduct its progreſs; the ſame hand " that breaks the fetters of a nation ſhould be " ſufficiently powerful to reſtrain its paſſions; but " the revolutions of ſtates, however ſagaciouſly " planned, are ſubject to ſo many accidents, and " attended with ſo much ambition, and private " intereſt, that they frequently take a bias, in di- " rect oppoſition to the views of the firſt mover. " This was eminently the caſe with the French " Revolution, the origin of which, we muſt ſeek " not in its viſible epoch, but look back to times " far remote."

I ſhall wave this author's unqualified invectives againſt the French Emigrant Nobleſſe, as the cauſe of moſt of the calamities of their country; to introduce his energetic deſcription of the fall of Robeſpierre.

" At the moment this pamphlet is going to preſs, " Robeſpierre, is overthrown by a clap of thunder; " his guilty blood flows upon the ſpot where that " of the benevolent Louis, Marie Antoinette, and " ſeveral others, was ſhed. Divine juſtice ſeems " to have reſerved him for this ſpecial retaliation; " this alone purſued him, and men were merely " paſſive in the execution of its ſentence. Hu- " manly ſpeaking, the condemnation of Robeſ- " pierre was by no means legal; even his murder- " ers were partakers in his guilt, though they " accuſed him of original, unatonable, and even " improbable crimes. In fact, his death ſeemed " to have been demanded by the howling of the " Furies, and merely a conſequence of the appli- " cation of his own principles, and that denial of " reſponſibility, which led to the execution of the

" King. It was the Firſt of September, turned " againſt himſelf; thoſe cannibal tactics which " muſt ſtill be repeated, to clear the earth of thoſe " monſters, to whom they have been familiar."

This author, a ſtrenuous advocate for the conſtitution of 1791, as a proof of the futility of all democratic revolutions, is forced, unintentionally, to pay a compliment to the Britiſh Conſtitution, through his panegyrics upon that which approximates towards it, the neareſt of any: and he, at the ſame time, demonſtrates the vanity of every attempt to deviate from that line, to which, even the French nation, is neceſſarily returning. If the politics of 1791, ſays he, ſhould ever obtain a predominance, after a thouſand factions have had their day, they will infallibly convince the French, that their true happineſs, is equally as diſtant from a licentious liberty, as from an authority without bounds or limits.

While ſome writers ſeem inclined to carry their prejudices againſt German literature too far, it is but juſt to obſerve, that the reign of the late Emperor Joſeph ſeemed to inſpire ſome of the authors of that period with true Engliſh notions of government. Far from the degrading ſentiments of the Illuminati, their opinions add a dignity to human nature; and, as genuine liberty is never ſpoken of in any part of the known world without ſome reference to *England*, or *Engliſhmen*, ſome obſervations from a ſmall German tract, publiſhed at Vienna in 1781, intituled, The Creed of a Citizen of the Nineteenth Century, as they may pleaſe, as well as flatter, our vanity, cannot be diſagreeable.

" I believe, ſays the anonymous author, that " the maxim, that we are under no obligation to " a bad government, and that one may violently

" deprive a tyrant of life, is ſcandalous, falſe, and
" blaſphemous.

" I believe that the laws cannot be better ex-
" preſſed than through the will of an upright and
" virtuous Regent.

" I believe that unlimited liberty is a chimera."

" I believe, that if Rome had not deſtroyed Car-
" thage, Carthage would have deſtroyed Rome. See
" an illuſtration of this in England and her ene-
" mies. If England does not loſe her *ſuperiority*
" *at ſea*, it is evident, that with reſpect to com-
" merce, *all other powers muſt become her vaſſals.*

" I believe the courage of an Engliſhman never
" forſakes him. Expoſed to the utmoſt danger, he
" will improve the ſituation. If the country muſt
" be ruined, he will ſay, rather to-day than to-
" morrow.

" I believe the abilities of any perſon in Geome-
" try, may be equalled by another; the ſolution
" of problems being founded in certain data. But
" that in politics, there are no ſelf evident proofs,
" which neceſſarily lead to other truths: all depends
" upon genius.

" I believe there are caſes when it is neceſſary
" for a Prince to ſet himſelf above the laws; to alter,
" and even infringe them. But if he is prudent,
" he will neither tear, nor obliterate the picture,
" but only give it a new face."

It is to be lamented that ſeveral authors in Ger-
many, enjoying the character of fine writers, have,
with Wieland, enliſted under the banners of Infi-
delity. Religion, however, is not left without a
witneſs in the genius of that country. The reader
of taſte will excuſe my attempt in tranſlating the
following beautiful ſpecimen of the true ſublime,
from a German verſion of Pſalm xix. by Profeſſor
Ramler.

The

THE heav'nly concave's everlaſting frame,
The azure canopy where meteors flame,
The ſelf-pois'd earth beneath, and theſe accord
To join in owning their eternal Lord.

Day ſpeaks his praiſe, in heaven's all-chearing light,
Repeated by a thouſand tongues at night;
All nations learn the mighty theme to ſing;
All look with rapture to the day's bright King.

His preſence, ſhining thro' th' etherial round,
Draws the dark foreſt from the earth profound;
The dew-fraught clouds, he from th' ocean fills,
Diſtill'd anew, or ſtream'd adown the hills.

A verdant robe, he for the earth prepares,
Bedeck'd with flower's, whoſe various tiſſue bears
Each hue, that on his cloud-wrought cincture glows,
The azure violet, or crimſon roſe.

His purple Throne he in the Eaſt diſplays;
His vaſt domain unwearied he ſurveys;
Unnumber'd realms are in his circuit bleſs'd;
His courſe triumphant, ends in glorious reſt.

From his exhauſtleſs ſea of lambent light,
He richly fills the ſilver orb of night;
The morning ſtar, and brother choir advance,
And, wreath'd with rays, perform their myſtic dance.

Thro' boundleſs ſpace, thus Sun and Stars proclaim
Th' Almighty hand, that form'd this wond'rous frame;
And, for his praiſe their rapid wheels employ'd,
For ever rolling thro' the mighty void.

I ſhall now leave the merits and defects of our continental neighbours, to ſhew by what means we have avoided the rocks, upon which others have ſplit. With reſpect to the Democratical Faction, much indeed is owing to the vigilance of Miniſters in ſaving the country from

"*Oratores novi, ſtulti, adoleſcentuli.*"

Still, other cauſes co-operating, ſeem to have fixed the ſafety of this country, from the attacks of its domeſtic enemies, upon an immoveable baſis; and

have thus contributed to the gradual, but certain extinction of that hot ſpirit, which has cauſed ſo much alarm to the lovers of good order and that ſubordination, by which, it can only be ſupported.

In the firſt place, every degree of confidence which the London Correſponding Society repoſed in the nobility and others, who, for a time, gave into the idea of univerſal ſuffrage, and annual, or triennial, parliaments, has been rapidly declining ever ſince their Aſſociation refuſed to come into the meaſures of the Whig Club; the propoſal of which, by the latter, engendered that diſlike which afterwards increaſed in proportion as the Reforming Societies imbibed the doctrines of *civil* and *moral* equality.

Secondly, diviſions and mutual diſtruſt among members, occaſioned by the puniſhment of ſome of the number, the dread of the ſame fate, and the great loſs of time requiſite for ſerving the various offices. But another circumſtance which contributed to haſten the criſis of the diſſolution of this body, was, the introduction of the *United Men* into the metropolis, in 1797 and 1798; or rather the toleration of ſuch perſons in the London Correſponding Society, as joint members of both! I ſay the toleration, becauſe the known violence of the former, cauſed them to be eyed with ſo much ſuſpicion, that one diviſion of the London Correſponding Society, was denied admiſſion at the houſe of a member, only for writing a letter to one of the *United Societies*.

The grand arcana of this new eſtabliſhment was always acknowledged to the *initiated*, "as to form "a diverſion in favour of the enemy, in caſe of a "landing." Many perſons alſo undertook to learn the French language, no doubt, with a view of facilitating a communication.

That

That the *United Men* ſhould be obnoxious to numbers of the London Correſponding Society may not be eaſily credited by ſtrangers; the fact, however, which I have ſtated, muſt be admitted; for, if both of theſe aſſociations were hideous or unnatural, ſtill, a diſſimilarity, might exiſt between them; ſuch as is hinted in a German Hiſtory of Apparitions, one of whom is deſcribed as being ſo exceedingly terrific, as to affright other ſpectres!

Notwithſtanding, as the procuring and learning the uſe of arms were the ground work of the aſſociation of the *United Men*, numbers of the London Correſponding Society, who did not reliſh theſe daring meaſures, very prudently withdrew from both aſſociations. The government's knowledge of theſe ſeveral circumſtances, is, in my opinion, a ſufficient vindication of the neceſſity of the Bills againſt Sedition, and the Suſpenſion of the Habeas Corpus Act.

But farther, no accurate obſerver can poſſibly be ignorant, how much the herding principle has been checked by an unprecedented price of proviſions; I ſpeak only of the lower claſſes: the beer-houſes which, previous to the late riſe of the neceſſaries of life, uſed, in working neighbourhoods, to be filled three evenings out of the ſix, have been gradually deſerted. The paſſengers, who, in the piping times of peace, were frequently obſtructed, can now paſs, unmoleſted by ballad ſingers, and drunken ſquabbles in the ſtreets, while the number of night charges at the watch-houſes have decreaſed in proportion: and this accidental alteration of circumſtances, by compelling mechanics and others to ſhare their porter at home with their families, has prevented many of them from being introduced to the Infidel or Political Societies, at the public houſes. As for the ſeceding and repentant clubbiſts;

biſts, many of them are not a little aſtoniſhed at their credulity, in being led away by men, only intent upon the diſplay of their oratory, or filling their pockets at the expence of the public opinion. Nor will it ſoon be forgotten, that ſome perſons of opulence, who had been clamorous for democratic diſtinction, were afterwards implicated in charges of monopoly and oppreſſion; and, that during the late exceſſive dearth of proviſions, the principal part of the public charity did not flow from men, before in the habit of haranguing the populace upon their *real grievances*, but from others, generally in *oppoſition* to ſuch principles and proceedings! Another final mean of damping the revolutionary ſpirit, in the Societies I have been ſpeaking of, was the recollection, that in their corporate economy, viz. in the petty adminiſtration of their affairs, though there were no millions unaccounted for, yet there were many and repeated defaulters, and dilapidations of a leſſer amount, clearly demonſtrating that *Citizens* and *Miniſters* in *miniature*, forming the *Executive Committee*, or acting as Secretaries, have been the firſt to ſecure *their own intereſts*. And farther, when called to account for this *un-citizen like* behaviour, have even denied the right of reſponſibility, and withheld or deſtroyed the documents which might have been brought againſt them!

But, notwithſtanding theſe leſſons, a delirium ſeems to have attached to, and never to have left the divided remains of Engliſh Democracy, till it received the ſhock of Bonaparte's conſtitution! Otherwiſe, the voice of Reaſon, added to the former changes in the French government, muſt have been heard; or even thoſe revolutions would have ſilently deſtroyed all the ideal and imitative frames, which the Conſtitution-builders had been laying

for

for years on this ſide of the water, and have forced them back upon their own, though by a negative preference.

But in ſpite of the diſcouraging ſpecimens exhibited to the London Correſponding Society and their adherents, *viz.* by their *Executive Committee*, and other mimic miniſters; while they flattered themſelves that the foundations of Republicaniſm ſtood ſure in France, a cure was always expected in the old revolutionary mode of *changing men*. It was to little purpoſe that the ſocieties were deterred from meeting: that their diſpirited leaders had withdrawn themſelves, or were ſcattered far and wide in different priſons; the Republican principle, they contended, ſtill remained *inviolate* and *incorruptible!* But where? Not among the Nobles who had ceaſed to call Plebeian meetings, as the latter ſuppoſed, to conſult with them!—not among the dependants upon theſe Nobles, who had ſeceded from the Senate, and enhanced their crimes in ceaſing to harraſs the Miniſter:—not among the Commercial men in the City of London, whoſe intereſt it was to continue his ſupport; but it was to France, that they ſtill looked for the *fruits of the Tree of Liberty*, which was to be yielded to them alſo in due ſeaſon. A ſignal victory, obtained by the Auſtrians, or any of the Allies, ſeldom damped the hopes of Democracy; this was looked upon, as no more than the pruning of the branches, neceſſary to make them ſhoot again with freſh vigour. If a commander was guilty, or accuſed of correſpondence with the enemy, he was only deemed a canker-worm, who wanted to eat away the root. If crowds of Emigrants or Prieſts were adjudged to death, it was ſtill neceſſary to deſtroy them as ſo many locuſts or caterpillars, who would have devoured the leaves; or, if whole branches of this

precious tree of liberty were carried away to engraft upon other trees in Italy, Egypt, or the Indies, ſtill all was well; or, if the State Gardeners murdered each other, in conſequence of their diſagreements about the manure, or the mode of dreſſing or fencing this hopeful ſcion, ſtill no difference was made. Robeſpierre, it was thought, would certainly bring it to perfection. It was afterwards transferred to the Briſſotines, the Sieyes, and others, who continued to clip, and even ſtunt its branches; ſtill, as the root was ſuppoſed to be ſound and vigorous, and that it would again ſhoot out with all its energies, when the managers could agree among themſelves, theſe retrenchments created no alarm. Every ſucceeding Gardener, it was preſumed, would mend the fault of his predeceſſor; and when it was put under the care of Bonaparte, then was expectation, for a moment, wound up to its higheſt pitch; yet no ſooner had his new plan ripened into birth, than the falling off was inexpreſſible! Conjecture now ſeemed loſt, and the zig-zag flaſhes of opinion, emitting a dark and dubious glare, refuſed to be confined to any given point. The multitude that ſet out to follow the French revolution, whatever courſe it might take, though before ſomewhat confuſed by the many languages it had ſpoken, were now at their *ne plus ultra*. They were exactly in the ſituation of thoſe timid animals, who, preſſed and perplexed by the ſhouts of the hunters, know not which courſe to purſue. In fact, it was now neceſſary, at all events, to return; for as the Archimedean ground of France, upon which all the world was to have been moved, had vaniſhed, and only preſented a yawning gulph in its place—there was no alternative. And to thoſe who had recovered their reaſon, in ever ſo ſmall a degree, it was now evident, that

the

the ſhelter ſtill afforded by the Britiſh oak, was infinitely preferable to any exotic ſubſtitute whatever.

But independent of theſe facts, which no ſophiſtry is able to palliate, and which no dexterity of movement can evade, the relative merits and demerits of Ariſtocracy and Democracy, I think, may be illuſtrated from ſome conſiderations not hitherto explored; and which, I preſume, muſt place the weakneſs and inſufficiency of the latter in a new point of view, and beyond all contradiction. To proceed; if we compare the ruling members of the body politic, to the ſuperior faculties in the human frame, it will appear that there is a natural correſpondence, and appoſite relation between the loweſt and worſt paſſions in individual exiſtence, and the tumultuous motions, the furor, or the panic fears of democracy in the great world, or organized ſociety; while Ariſtocracy, from its ſtability, and the ſuperior enlargement of its views, naturally approximates to Reaſon, and the cardinal virtues of Prudence, Juſtice, Temperance, and Fortitude; and thus, abſtractedly conſidered, is, in fact, the *wiſdom* and *maturity* of human ſociety, in oppoſition *to its raſhneſs, its youth, and inexperience.*

For an experimental conviction of the evaneſcency, and abſolute nullity of a Democratic form of government, we need not look at France, where it has recently withered even in the hands of philoſophers, but turn our eyes to the petulancy and littleneſſes, frequently attendant upon parochial adminiſtrations; and for no other reaſon, but becauſe the adminſtrators are choſen as it were *by lot, out of the body of the people.* Theſe annual rulers, when veſted with a "little brief authority," are often ſo much elated by the ſudden change, that the conſequence they aſſume, not being *educated* to rule, nor

habituated to command, is ſuch, as to render themſelves perfectly ridiculous or contemptible; to ſay nothing of their too frequent acts of inhumanity, which have ſo often called for the interference of ſuperior courts, more enlightened, and conſequently more humane judges. Thus, if the proceedings of the committee-rooms had been as public as thoſe of the bench, the ſarcaſm of the comic muſe would have found an ample ſubject in their diſcuſſions and awards.

If we reduce the experiments of Democracy to a narrower circle, notwithſtanding ſome of its advocates have told us, that the head of the government ſhould reſemble the preſident of a common-club, not *hereditary*, but removeable at the pleaſure of the members, the *ſovereign people*, we ſhall ſtill find the theory at war with the practice. Let us examine the internal economy of the numerous popular ſocieties under the name of benefit clubs: Are they not ſubject to perpetual ſquabbles, growing, as it were, out of the facility of crimination? Are not their concerns generally managed by a ſmall junto, and their diſputes generally ſettled by the clerk? No member is he, but only a ſervant to the ſociety: yet to his opinion the majority moſtly pay a deference, merely on the ſuppoſition of his ſuperior abilities! Is not ſome one, in theſe caſes, the indiſpenſible character who muſt temper their acrimony, ſoothe their jealouſies, and mitigate their awards? Theſe are undeniable facts. A governing Democracy then, even in miniature, is a non-entity which can have no permanent exiſtence but upon paper, or in the imaginations of thoſe who mingle and confound theories for tried facts.

But, after all, if any thing is wanting to ſatisfy ſpeculatiſts, who hold a contrary opinion, let them

try

try Democracy upon their own families, and they will there find it the proper parent of misrule and perpetual discord. And as I have shewn it to be that, in a constitution, which the passions are in the human frame, Aristocracy is, and must be, the *Reason of a State*. As such, it possesses the indefeasible right of pre-eminence. I do not say it can exist independently of Democracy; it has as much need of the strength and enthusiasm of the people, as they have of its prudence and stability. But as the passions in an individual should ever be subservient to reason, it is equally just, that the passions of a nation should be constantly subjected to the controul of the more noble and superior faculties of the body politic.

If the late degeneracy of the French nation, into the madness of Democracy, has given us just cause of alarm for our domestic tranquillity, its subsequent approximation, under the present Grand Consul, towards that Aristocracy we have just sketched out, should allay every apprehension upon that score.

The points of resemblance, in the situation of various branches of society, and the interests of clashing parties in this country, are not likely, after what has passed, to fall into a similar direction with those of France, immediately preceding the late revolution. Even the disaffected, with the failure of eight years of experiment full in their faces, and the consequent degradation of the French revolutionary spirit, are deprived both of precept and example. They are, in a manner, bound hand and foot, and thrown into the gulph of doubt and uncertainty. To recover from the shock, therefore, which the centre of *all revolutions* has sustained, must be a work of time; and, before the public mind can be roused into action, it will rather re-

quire a ſecurity againſt future ſufferings, than an indemnity for the paſt.

In fine, the conſequences of the French revolution may, for a long period to come, preſent themſelves at the elbow of every project for political change or innovation; being perpetuated in thoſe outrages of feeling, which cannot ſoon be forgotten, they are impreſſed upon the minds of men, in characters which cannot eaſily be eraſed. On the other hand, theſe characters may even defy the power of obliteration, being too deeply indented in the earth, in the graves which have been dug for the millions who have fallen.

But though, all through the courſe of this work, I have inſiſted upon the impotence of the Democratic and Infidel ſocieties, unconnected with higher influence, or external agency; and though their meetings are no more holden; ſtill, as ſcattered individuals, they are ſufficiently numerous to do conſiderable miſchief; the Atheiſtical claſs in particular ſeem moſtly incorrigible. Incredible as it may appear, they are all looking forward for a millennium of their own! And, notwithſtanding the repeated failures of the French philoſophers and revolutioniſts, the Engliſh Atheiſts blindly inſiſt, "that civil ſociety is in a progreſſive ſtate of im-
"provement, to which every government, by its
"weakneſs and crimes, is unavoidably contribu-
"ting; the final end of which, will be the diſſolu-
"tion of them all; and that the time is faſt ap-
"proaching, and will infallibly arrive, when man
"and nature will be perfect in all their relations,
"and the former will be able to live without go-
"vernment, without laws, and without ſubmiſ-
"ſion!!!" In England, theſe fanatics call themſelves the diſciples of Mirabaud and Godwin. Upon the German Continent, one of their moſt

notorious leaders is Profeſſor Fichte, late of the Univerſity of Jena; for a particular account of whom, *vide* Appendix to Vol. IV. of the Anti-Jacobin Magazine, and the German Journals for 1799, one of which, thus ſtrikingly contraſts the unexampled audacity of the new impiety, in an Epigram from the words of David—" *The fool hath* " *ſaid in his heart*"—

> The ancient Atheiſt, dreading to impart
> His impious creed, conceal'd it in his heart;
> But modern Atheiſts, fearleſs of the rod,
> In words and deeds, proclaim, "There is no God!"

Being warned, in ſacred writ, of theſe ſcoffers, that were to appear in the laſt times, we know, from the ſame authority, that their end is deſtruction, and that their folly ſhall be manifeſt to all.

But though, in a moral view, the anti-religious opinions of Infidels muſt meet with accumulated contempt from the Chriſtian world at large; yet, as thoſe who entertain them are all, without exception, tinged with revolutionary politics, and naturally deteſt every eſtabliſhment, the utmoſt caution continues neceſſary on the part of government, to prevent any combuſtion or real grievance, of which theſe incorrigible members might avail themſelves, to involve the community, as agents, in the proſecution of their invidious deſigns.

THE END.

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